

Guidance on Temporary School Closures

Date: November 2020

These are the procedures we follow in the event that we are unable to open due to severe weather conditions or other exceptional reasons such as boiler failure. If a decision is made not to open the school at the start of the day, or to close the school during the day, parents/carers will be notified by the following means:

- Text message/ e-mail to the main mobile telephone number/ e-mail address a parent / carer has registered with ParentMail.
- Message on the homepage of our website;
- Message on the Writtle Infant School Facebook group;
- Message on the Writtle Infant School Twitter feed.

Please check the local radio stations (details below) if a message from us is not received, as the contact details for you may be incorrect / outdated or missed off our systems. If this happens, please let us know when the school re-opens so that we can amend our records. **It is essential that you update the school office of any changes to your contact details.**

- BBC Essex radio announcement - broadcasting on 103.5 and 95.3 FM 729, 765 and 1530 AM and DAB and on the website www.bbc.co.uk/essex;
- Heart FM radio announcement - broadcasting on 102.6 and 96.3 FM or www.heartessex.co.uk;
- Visit [Essex County Council's Emergency School Closures page](#). The Emergency Closures page will update as and when notifications are received, therefore it is recommended to continue to check or refresh the page.

If no message is received/ there is no announcement on the local radio stations then please assume the school is open. Please do not block phone lines by calling in.

A decision to close the school will only be made as a last resort, as every effort will be made to keep the school open. In bad weather, as well as the children's welfare, we must also have regard for the health and safety of those staff who have to travel long distances to get to school. We must also be confident that we will have sufficient staff in place to supervise and take care of the children at the start of the day. These circumstances are sometimes difficult to assess very early in the morning and a decision has to be made on the information we know at the time.

We are currently subject to COVID conditions, so arrangements we might normally have in place, such as mixing children together or having children in the hall, are not permitted under Essex County Council advice. Unless we have enough staff to operate safely in bubbles we may reluctantly have to close when under normal circumstances we would be able to stay open.

If we do have to close the school, we would always aim to resume normal service as soon as possible. Under normal circumstances we open the school (8.45 am every school day) 10 minutes earlier than our published school time opening of 8.55 am, to cover any time lost through any unavoidable/unplanned school closures. Fortunately these are rare occurrences. Currently we have different pick up and drop off arrangements due to social distancing needs.