

SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

For school year 2018-2019
Date of approval: 20.08.2018

1. Purpose

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances might arise which necessitates the closure of the school at short notice, the most common of which is severe bad weather conditions.

To ensure the safety of our staff and pupils, our School closure policy identifies procedures for occasions when pupils may have to be sent home early or when the whole school may be forced to close because of severe weather or other circumstances.

The procedures are primarily intended for severe weather, but they can also be applied in other circumstances, e.g. heating breakdowns or loss of utilities such as water or electricity.

2. Closures before the school has opened

The decision to close the school is not taken lightly. When staff and pupils can get to school, the school will be open, subject to a safe level of staffing being available.

The responsibility for deciding to close the school lies with the **General/Executive Director**, in consultation with the **Health and Safety Officer**. Before making a decision, the **General/Executive Director** will make reasonable steps to ascertain the situation at the school itself and will discuss the matter with the **Health and Safety Committee**. The decision to close would be made after assessing the risks and taking into consideration local circumstances such as the fact that there is only one girtted access road to Avenor College's locations for the school and high school from the main route Bucharest-Ploiesti. The decision to close cannot be made by Local Authority staff, such as the Mayor or National Weather Institute, as it is a school responsibility, still their recommendation will be considered. However, where the decision to close or partially close has been made, the school will inform the Local Authority.

Where appropriate, both Avenor College locations (school and nursery) considered separately and/or together, can temporarily amend their times of opening and closing to allow some level of education provision to pupils. If it is appropriate, we would use this flexibility to allow the school to open at some point through the day when members of the staff are more able to travel or to provide greater time for them to arrive at school.

3. Closures when the pupils are in school

Sometimes, circumstances arise such as inclement weather (thunderstorms, snowstorms),

when the children are at school. This can mean that, where there is the potential that the weather will bring significant disruption, the school will need to close early.

This will be done as a last resort and only after consultation with the Health and Safety Committee.

In some circumstances, some classes may be sent home early as staff living further from school would need to be sent home earlier than others. If safe staffing ratios could not be maintained, some pupils would need to go home at that time.

4. Contacting Parents

The school uses a number of means of communication to provide information to parents. If there is advanced notice of poor weather, then emails will be sent to parents and information will be posted on the school website and Facebook page.

If the decision needs to be made at last minute, such as early in the morning, then a text will be sent to parents via SMS and email informing them of a total closure or to identify which classes can be sent to school. The information will again be posted on the school website and Facebook page as soon as the decision was made.

The school is required to **let the Local Authority (Mayor, Scholar Inspectorate of Bucharest) know** so that their web sites can be updated.

In all cases, the **school's website** should be the first places for parents to look for all the information.

5. Advanced Warning

Wherever possible, advanced warning of the potential risk of inclement weather will be provided. This will identify the risk and provide any information received from the Local Authority (**Mayor, Scholar Inspectorate of Bucharest, National Weather Institute**).

Advanced warning will also be provided where there is any planned work to heating or utilities which may impact on the ability of the school to provide education to all the pupils. If the closure, particularly in relation to utilities or heating work, does not affect all children, parents will be informed of which classes can attend school.

In case of bad weather (e.g. heavy snow), the decision to close the School and/or Nursery may be taken. Parents will be informed in due time in order to take the appropriate measures via email and social media (the school's Facebook page).

6. After school hours clubs (Co-curricular clubs after 14.00)

Parents will be informed about the availability of the after school hours clubs as early as possible in the day. The decision to open or close the club will be made by the Club Coordinators from both locations in consultation with the General/Executive Director and the Health and Safety Committee/Coordinator.

7. Working At Home

When school is closed for the day as a result of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, work for the children to complete at home will be available on the class or homework section in the Engage Portal. The type of homework will vary so that it is age appropriate. There is an expectation that in our efforts to reduce the impact of snow days, the children will spend some of their day working on the homework. The homework will then be assessed on their return to school in line with our Homework policy.

8. Review

The **Health and Safety Committee** reviews this policy every two years or on necessity, earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if either of Board of Administration or General/Executive Director makes recommendations on how the policy might be improved.