

WALLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

There are rare occasions when the school will need to be closed for unforeseen circumstances, e.g. severe weather conditions, boiler breakdown. The decision to close the school may need to be taken either before the beginning of the school day or during the school day.

The following procedure is to be followed in order to safeguard and to take into account the Health and Safety of all people who use the school site.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 Before the beginning of the School Day

If a decision to close the school needs to be taken before the beginning of the school day:

1. At 6.00am, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Headteacher will assess the severity of the conditions.
2. Headteacher contacts the Premises Manager to discuss site conditions and agree on action to be taken.
3. If a decision is taken to close the school, the Headteacher will inform the CEO & Chair of the Local Governing Body.
4. The Headteacher will:
 - If possible, to go into school and handle any arrivals at school.
 - Assess whether any public examinations are due to take place that day, and make arrangements with the relevant member of SLT and Examinations Officers.
 - If public examinations are due to take place, the Headteacher will assess staffing availability and any safeguarding issues. Members of the Leadership Team to contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to advise whether they are able to get into school, and where possible, Leadership Team and staff members living locally will go into school to invigilate public examinations.
5. The Headteacher will:
 - Inform the Communications Officer and instruct to send both (1) a mobile phone text to all staff and parents and (2) an email (using SchoolComms) to parents – target time 07.00am, or as soon as possible thereafter.
 - Inform the GLT IT Manager and instruct to put messages (1) onto the school's website – target time 07.00am, or as soon as possible thereafter.
 - Inform the Premises Manager and/or site staff, and agree arrangements for site opening. Depending on the conditions, the school car parks may need to be closed. Site staff will prioritise safe access and fire escape routes for pedestrians. Adequate supplies of industrial salt/grit will be kept for this purpose.
6. Arrangements for any students arriving at school (if unaware that school is closed)
 - Any student arriving at school will be registered by a member of staff and looked after in a central location (usually the Hall or Canteen).
 - Students will be allowed to contact parents/carers, using mobile phones (if available) or school phones, and will be allowed to return home again once parental/carer consent has been granted.
 - If students that have arrived at school are unable to contact parents/carers, and/or are unable to make arrangements to return home, then they will be looked after at school until reasonable arrangements can be made. In exceptional circumstances, students may be looked after until the end of the normal school day (2:50pm) and then will be released as if it were a normal school day if safe to do so.

2.2 During the School Day

If a decision to close the school needs to be taken during the school day, the following will apply:

1. The Headteacher will assess the severity of the situation.
2. The Headteacher will discuss the site conditions and agree on any action to be taken with the Premises Manager and members of the Leadership Team.
3. If a decision is taken to close the school, the Headteacher will inform the CEO & Chair of the Local Governing Body.
4. The Headteacher will:
 - Inform the Communications Officer and instruct to send both (1) a mobile phone text to all staff and parents and (2) a SchoolComms email to parents.
 - Inform the GLT IT Manager and instruct to put messages (1) onto the school's website.
 - Inform the Premises Manager and/or site staff, and agree arrangements. Depending on conditions, the school car parks may need to be closed. Site staff will prioritise safe access and fire escape routes for pedestrians. Adequate supplies of industrial salt/grit will be kept for this purpose.
5. The Headteacher will:
 - Inform teaching and support staff of the decision to close school, as soon as possible by the most practical means (usually by email and/or memo drop to classrooms, or alternatively through staff briefing). Staff will be told of the planned time of closure and any special arrangements that are required.
 - Assess whether any public examinations are taking place or are due to take place that day, and make arrangements with the relevant Deputy Headteacher and Examinations Officers.
6. Normal arrangement for students to leave school will be as follows:
 - Students will be required to collect in their Tutor Groups. The register will be taken.
 - Students will be allowed to contact parents/carers, using mobile phones (if available) or school phones, and will be allowed to make their own way home once parental consent has been granted.. Form Tutors will assess whether they are satisfied that parental/carer consent has been given. No student in Years 7 to 11 will be allowed to leave unless their parents/carers have given permission.
 - If parental permission cannot be gained, students will be supervised in a central location in school (usually the Hall or Canteen) until the end of the normal school day, and then will be released as if it were a normal school day, if safe to do so.
7. Teaching and support staff will be able to leave school by agreement with their line manager and the Headteacher (taking into account the number of students remaining in school and any safeguarding or health & safety issues arising).

2.3 Special arrangements in respect of public examinations

If a decision to close the school is taken, the following will apply:

1. All students due to sit **public examinations** (specifically GCSE's, AS or A Levels) should endeavor to make their way into school as normal. This **does not** apply to internal, school or 'mock' examinations.
2. School staff will endeavor to invigilate the examination as normal.
3. If the examination has to be stopped, the decision will be taken by the Headteacher.

A school closure will only occur if the conditions are such that there is a high risk for the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

First Approved: December 2012
Reviewed & updated: June 2019

Annex 1

Sample wording for SchoolComms, Text, school website and LGFL website

“School will be closed on **DATE** due to adverse weather conditions. No students should come into school. Any students arriving at school will be sent home.

Exception: If a student is scheduled to sit a public examination **TODAY**, school staff will endeavour to run the examination. In this case, students should attempt to make their way into school as normal.”