

Birches Primary School

2018/ 2019

Dear Parents,

We are coming back to that time of year again when heavy frost or snow could affect the running of our school. My Board of Governors and myself have drawn up a set of procedures and risk assessments for us to follow during severe weather conditions.

I hope this letter makes our process clear to you, but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at school – 028 38851443.

How do I know if school is going to stay open or close?

Communication

1. **The school will text** parents to notify them if the school is closing.
 2. **The School Website** – www.birchesps.com will be updated regarding school closure.
 3. **The BBC** will also be contacted and the details will be made available through their services.
 4. If anyone does not have access to the internet please contact the school and alternative arrangements can be made.
- If possible any decision whether or not to close the school will be made the evening before.
 - There may be occasions when this decision will be made on the morning of the closure.

If school is open how do I know if the school bus is running?

The School Bus

1. The bus driver, Mr Robinson will be able to make an informed decision whether or not the bus will be available to bring children to school by 7.30am.
Parents whose children normally travel on the school bus will be contacted by a txt message in the morning if the bus is not running.
2. If weather conditions worsen throughout the day, the bus may not be available to bring children home.
If you are not sure if the bus will bring your children home, please contact school on 028 38851443.

Please make sure the school has up to date contact details.

Procedures To Follow Due To Severe Weather Conditions.

Factors To Consider When Making A Decision

The decision to open a school during periods of severe weather is dependent upon a risk assessment being carried out.

Weather Warning

If local weather forecasts have warned about severe weather in the local area or areas where staff live, then the following points will be taken into consideration before a decision to keep the school open or to close the school is made:

Health and Safety

- Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
- Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- In an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?
- Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?

Transport

- Can staff safely attend the school?

Staffing

- Are sufficient senior staff able to attend?
- Is the teacher ratio acceptable?

Welfare

- Can the school kitchen open?
- Is there running water for drinking and personal hygiene?
- Is the heating and electricity working?

Information For Parents

Information for parents regarding school closures from the Department of Education is available on the NI Direct website at

www.nidirect.gov.uk/schoolclosures.