

SCHOOL CLOSURES

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS AT 31st October 2016

This document gives Parents/Carers answers to questions about school closures. If your question is not answered here, please email schoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk.

What kind of school closures are there?

- **Emergency** - where the building cannot open as there is no hot water, the heating is not working or power failure.
- **Planned** - Where the school building is closed for elections, industrial action or when utility companies are doing planned maintenance work to gas, water or electric services in the area and all services are to be shut off. Schools are notified in advance of these closures and Headteachers will notify Parents/Carers of these closures.
- **Severe Weather** - Headteachers will make the decision locally to close where severe weather prevents the school from opening.

How will I find out if my child's school is closed?

- **The best way for you to be informed is by text direct to your mobile phone or by email. To receive these you will need to sign up for this service via Fife Direct. To sign up for text or email alerts, please enter your contact details via www.fifedirect.org.uk/alerts, click on Alerts and under Alert Services click on [Register with fifedirect](#).**
- **You may also be informed by the school directly through their Groupcall text and email service. Please make sure that your school has up to date contact details from you.**
- Headteachers will make the decision as early as possible on the day of the closure. If you have registered for School Closure Alerts on Fife Direct and are set up to receive messages from Groupcall, any closure alerts will be automatically sent to your mobile phone and/or email account.
- Schools may also use other methods of contacting Parents/Carers, such as school bag mail.
- Please note that text alerts and email issued via mobile network providers, may be delayed where there is high volume on mobile networks or the internet. Therefore, you should also make use of the other communication channels referred to in this document.

When will I receive further email or text alerts?

- You will only receive text alerts when the status of a school changes. The first text/email will be sent when the school closes and a further text/email will be sent only once the school reopens. If a school remains closed over more than one day, there will be no further automatic alerts until the school reopens.

My child has recently moved school?

- If your child moved to a new school or from a primary school to a high school in August 2015, you should amend the school details on your Fife Direct account to ensure you receive the correct school information. In the case of any other change, you should also make sure your details on Fife Direct are correct.

SEVERE WEATHER

What can Parents/Carers expect in cases of severe weather?

- The Education Service aims to maintain service delivery during severe weather and to minimise disruption to pupils and Parents/Carers.

- Where necessary, Headteachers will close their school as early as possible on the first morning of severe weather, to allow text/email alerts to be issued as quickly as possible.
- Janitorial staff will prioritise the clearing of one pathway per school as an access route for all building users. **This may not be your usual route into the school and it may not be the quickest route through the building.**
- Where there is heavy snowfall in Fife, resources will be deployed to the worst hit areas and therefore the clearing of playgrounds and car parks will not be a priority until all schools are open.
- It may not be possible to have all School Crossing Patrol Officers on duty during the worst of the weather. You should make arrangements to ensure the safety of your child to and from school.

What are the main channels of communication during severe weather?

- **Online** - All the news and information you'll need is online. Visit www.fifedirect.org.uk/closures for up to date information. Also, check the website of your own school.
- **By text or email through Fife Direct** – To sign up to receive text or email alerts, please enter your contact details via www.fifedirect.org.uk/alerts
- **By text or email through your school** – make sure that your mobile number and email address details to the school so that they can contact you by Groupcall
- **Follow-us** on [facebook.com/fifecouncil](https://www.facebook.com/fifecouncil) and twitter.com/fifecouncil
- **Listen** to Kingdom FM, Forth One and Tay FM
- **Check TV on Sky** – channel 539, press red or Virgin channel 233, press red

My child is transported to school by bus, will the services still operate?

- For those pupils who are transported to school by bus, please check www.fifedirect.org.uk, facebook or twitter for information which will be received from local bus companies.
- Further details on the status of your school bus may be obtained by calling your bus operator direct. The telephone number is available from your timetable or from the QR code on your bus pass.
- Buses may not be able to enter housing schemes to collect pupils from designated bus stops and will only stop at the main road to pick up pupils. Pupils should therefore make their way to main roads and congregate at the nearest bus stop.
- Should a bus become stranded or experience engine failure en route, pupils should remain in the bus or on the roadside as instructed by the driver. The driver will contact the depot and arrange for relief transport or repair so that the journey can continue. The depot will make contact with the school so that parents can be made aware of the situation and the action being taken.
- Pupils transported by taxis/mini-bus, will also possibly experience disruption during severe weather. In extreme weather conditions, the operators may not be able to provide transport from some or all the addresses on their route. Operators are expected, as far as possible, to make an attempt to contact these parents to advise them.

How can my child continue with their studies when the school is closed?

- Pupils can access revision material on line as well as use the materials and past papers which may have already been provided by their teachers.
- Many Higher and Advanced Higher courses are provided for via the internet through the Scholar program. Pupils studying most subjects can access their Scholar accounts on scholar.hw.ac.uk which provides tutorials, examination questions and E-assessments.
- Pupils who have access to their Glow accounts will find a range of information that will be very helpful. Please make sure that your child retains their username and password for access.
- Primary schools pupils can access a range of learning opportunities on Makewaves.
- BBC, Channel 4 and Learning and Teaching Scotland websites provide very good materials for revision.

How can I find out if school events have been cancelled in cases of severe weather?

- Where a school has closed on the morning of severe weather, it is likely that any evening events planned for that day will be cancelled. Updates will be provided on www.fifedirect.org.uk, Facebook and Twitter. Schools may also use Groupcall to notify you.
- “Community use” schools will not open when a school has been closed during the day.

Please stay safe and warm: make sure that you allow extra time for any journeys made during severe weather and that you and pupils are dressed appropriately for the conditions and are wearing suitable footwear with grips.