

December 2017

Dear Parents

This letter is to let you know how you might find out what decisions have been made in inclement weather, regarding school closure, along with other information. It is by no means exhaustive but gives guidance on how the school plan to operate when there are poor weather conditions.

The school will make every effort to remain open whenever possible. The decision to close the school will be made by me, as the Head teacher. The school will generally only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in/remain to keep the school running safely
2. Conditions on site are deemed dangerous or unhealthy for children or personnel
3. Conditions are considered to be, or are anticipated to become, too hazardous to travel

### **In the Event of Heavy Snow Before the School Day Starts**

#### **Parents**

When school closure is a possibility, parents may find out whether the school is open by:-

- Checking the West Sussex website or school's own website (<http://www.harting.w-sussex.sch.uk/website>). It is likely that the latter will be the earliest to be updated but this will depend on power and internet access.
- Listening to Spirit FM
- Receiving a text from school. If you do not have a reliable text service or poor signal in your area, you may wish to agree to contact another parent (rather than the school) as the office phone may not be manned due to staffing travel difficulties

If it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, parents should ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late and leave a message. It is important that parents make their own decisions about travel – safety is paramount. If, however, you assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### **The School**

As the Head, I will decide whether the school will open taking into account the conditions at the school and the ability of staff to get there. I will endeavour to inform you as early as possible, using the text system as the first means of communication. The website may need to be checked by you, in case the text system is slow.

Personal safety is the most important consideration and I would prefer to see children arrive a little late than risk injury.

#### **Exceptional Circumstances**

The School recognises that there may be cases where families are “cut off” due to particular difficulties in the area in which they live. In such cases parents should advise me of their particular circumstances so I can justify to the Local Authority why the absence should be approved.

## **In the event of heavy snowfall during the school day**

If there is heavy snowfall during the school day I may have to decide to close the school. The Office will contact parents, initially by text, asking that children are picked up from school as soon as possible. Working parents may wish to let the Office know of another parent or relative who has permission to collect the children in such an event. It may be necessary for me to release staff early, particularly if they live a distance from the school, so a skeleton staff may remain until children are off-site. Having a 'back up' parent or relative may help to ensure that the school personnel are safe too.

I hope that this information is helpful and illustrates how we expect to inform you. Bear in mind, that it is possible that communication to you might be really difficult without power – I am reliant on this for a phone signal and internet access, when at home. This affects my ability to update the website and send texts via our school system.

If I do have to declare a 'Snow day' or similar, please encourage your children to enjoy playing in it! When they are too cold, ask them to spend some time reading and practice maths skills, using websites, or brush up on times tables knowledge. We will endeavour to add extra snow-based activities if the closure is prolonged.

Best wishes

*Fiona*

Fiona Mullett