



## **Boher National School**

Boher, Ballina,  
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Roll Number: 09190G  
Charity Registration Number: 20204935  
Principal: Brian McKeogh  
Acting Deputy Principal: David Horan

### **Emergency Closures Policy**

#### **Introduction:**

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving parent representatives, staff and Board of Management. It will be circulated to the entire school community via the school website and also via the next school newsletter published (December 2024).

#### **Rationale:**

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to:

- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds, icy roads etc.
- Leaks and other issues in the local water scheme which causes a Health & Safety Issue regarding access to toilets or hand washing facilities
- Break down in heating system
- Serious damage to school building
- Critical Incident

Our policy for Emergency Closures follows the guidelines for schools available in the following publication;

National Rules for Schools – Rule 60

#### **Relationship to School Ethos:**

Boher N.S strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for the needs of all students as far as is practical and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

#### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children
- To comply with Health and Safety legislation

## Procedures

### **Advance warning of Status Red**

Following consultation at a national level with the Office of Emergency Planning and the management bodies for schools, the Departments of Education and Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's advice to settings is that they should consider not opening where a Status Red weather warning is forecast to coincide with the period/s during which children, students, staff or parents would be expected to be travelling to and from school or the ELC.

### **Black Ice:**

The school's elevation and location on a minor road with multiple sloping bends mean that low temperatures may result in the formation of black ice, creating treacherous road conditions. In such circumstances, the principal, in consultation with the Board of Management (BOM), may decide to close the school on health and safety grounds. Where possible, this decision will be made and communicated to the school community before 8:00 a.m. on the day of closure. This measure is taken to ensure the safety of students, staff, and parents traveling to and from the school.

### **Heavy Snowfall:**

To help prevent closures and to ensure that the school environment is safe, the following preparation will happen;

- Ensure that there is sufficient salt in October of each year. If there is not enough, the principal is responsible for ordering more. The principal will be responsible for ensuring salt is spread in the mornings where necessary
- In the event of a heavy snowfall or treacherous roads the principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. as soon as is feasible, and preferably before 8.a.m. on the day of closure, and a decision is made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If it is decided to close the school, the principal will send a message to all parents and staff via Aladdin informing them of the school closure. It is the responsibility of all parents to make sure they receive messages and notifications via Aladdin. If the snowfall is prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents will be informed of re-opening dates through Aladdin. Every effort will be made to contact parents and staff prior to 8 a.m. In the event of an emergency closure during the school day, parents will be contacted through Aladdin and staff members will remain with children until all are collected.

### **Disconnection of Services:**

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week's notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via Aladdin.

Where the heating system breaks down, the sewage system overflows or the water pipes burst, parents will be given notice as soon as possible via Aladdin. Every measure will be taken to repair the system as soon as possible.

### **High Winds/Thunderstorms:**

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. parents are contacted via Aladdin and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc. occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all – teachers will remain on the premises until all the children have been collected by parents/guardians.

### **Damage to school building**

The procedures in place for heavy snowfall are generally replicated in the event of severe damage to the school building such as burst pipes, collapsed ceilings, fire damage, etc. i.e. parents are contacted via Aladdin and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when damage occurs and remaining on the premises is a risk to all – teachers will remain on the premises until all the children have been collected by parents/guardians.

### **Critical Incident/Death:**

In some instances, the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, BoM member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures by Aladdin. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and BoM or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of Honour, readings or counselling is required.

### **Please note:**

All half days and in-service closures are notified to parents at least one week in advance.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Emergency closures in the school places particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command. These include;

- Compliance with Health and Safety legislation
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents

### **Ratification and Communication:**

This policy will be circulated to the entire school community via the school newsletter and on the school website.

**Implementation and Review:**

The policy was implemented from December 2024 and will be reviewed in 2027.