



MELROSE PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Headteacher - Mrs Gilly Innes

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Dear Parent/Carer

Information from Scottish Borders Council Severe Weather

This letter outlines the new protocol put in place for situations when adverse weather impacts on schools, replacing the Resilient Schools Policy.

The new protocol has been established after it became clear over recent severe weather events that Resilient Schools was no longer sustainable, as significantly fewer teachers lived within walking distance of schools than in 2010, when the policy was developed.

What are the new arrangements?

Decisions about school closures (including school nurseries), either individually, by cluster, or across the whole of the Scottish Borders will be taken centrally by senior staff, based on the latest weather forecasts, information from Head Teachers, locally-based staff and partners, including Police Scotland. At all times, decisions regarding school closures will be taken in the interests of pupil and staff safety.

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

The Groupcall messaging service will continue to be used to notify parents about closures, with information also available through our website, social media channels and Radio Borders. Parents and carers are reminded that they should make sure their child's school has up to date contact details.

Why are some schools open, partially open and some schools closed?

There are various factors that need to be taken into consideration when deciding on whether a school remains open. Health and safety dictates the number of staff required for the number of pupils, including staff with first aid training. If there are insufficient staff this may result in partial opening or not opening at all. In the case of partial opening the school will make a decision on which year groups will be asked to attend. It may be that your child is taught by a teacher from another school if your child's regular teacher cannot attend or is off work. Only where absolutely necessary will a full school closure be implemented.

What about school transport?

A separate communication has been sent to parents of children who use school transport.

What is the expectation for children walking to school?

Pupil safety is our main priority. It is ultimately a parent/carer's decision whether or not you think it is safe for your child to walk to school. If you are able to, we would encourage parents of younger pupils to escort their child to and from school during severe weather. We also ask parents to ensure that their child wears clothing and footwear appropriate to the conditions, especially those waiting for school transport that may be delayed due to road conditions.

Are pupils given work to do when their school is closed or partially open?

All schools have systems in place to ensure that work is allocated. Pupil materials have been developed and schools will share this with pupils either electronically through the school website, GLOW or in pre-prepared packs for pupils that cannot get into school.

Why are parents being put in the position of having some children off school and others attending?

Sometimes it may not be appropriate or necessary for a blanket closure of schools, either in a cluster or across the whole region. Decisions around closures or partial closures are taken in the interests of safety

and wherever possible we will attempt to keep schools open, but this is not always possible. Where schools are open in bad weather it is important that parents realise that they ultimately have the responsibility to decide whether or not they wish to send their children to school under these circumstances.

Will school meals be affected?

The situation varies across schools. Where there are difficulties providing a hot meal, parents will be advised to send their child with a packed lunch. Often sandwich lunches can be provided for all pupils. During and immediately following a period of severe weather, food deliveries may be affected which may result in temporary changes to menus.

In the event of Melrose Primary School being closed, arrangements for home learning will be shared via the school App or Glow.

Yours sincerely

Gilly Innes