



Hunter Primary School Adverse Weather/School Closure Information update (December 2022)

The overall objective for all schools is to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people. Overall, there is a clear presumption that establishments will remain open wherever practical in order to minimise the impact on the education provision for learners. However, the Head Teacher in liaison with Education Resources HQ, may take the unusual step of closing an establishment or opening later where there is significant concern about the safety of children or employees. Schools have procedures in place in the event of such circumstances.

1. Where adverse weather results in a school closure

There are three main types of closures associated with adverse weather:-

a) The school is unable to open for the day.

This is extremely rare and would be as a result of a decision by SLC HQ to close all schools or due to an emergency situation arising within the school overnight e.g. flooding. Under these circumstances we will use all communication channels available and parents/carers should:-

- Check for updates on the school app
- Check for a school alert text
- Check the SLC (www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) and school website (www.hunter-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk) for updates
- Follow SLC (@SouthLanCouncil) and school twitter (@HunterPrimary)
- Check the Parent Council Facebook page
- Listen to local radio stations e.g. BBC Radio Scotland, Clyde 1, etc.

b) The school needs to open later than normal to all/groups of pupils.

We will always do all we can to open, even if this means opening later in the morning in extremely rare circumstances. This would be as a result of a decision made by the Head Teacher in conjunction with SLC HQ. This situation may occur, for example, where adverse weather conditions mean that there are not enough staff within the building at 9 am and the situation needs to be assessed for an initial period of time. Under these circumstances we will use all communication channels available and parents/carers should:-

- Check for updates on the school app
- Check for a school alert text
- Check the SLC (www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) and school website (www.hunter-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk) for updates
- Follow SLC (@SouthLanCouncil) and school twitter (@HunterPrimary)
- Check the Parent Council Facebook page
- Listen to local radio stations e.g. BBC Radio Scotland, Clyde 1, etc.

c) *The school needs to close early.*

This situation is also extremely rare and will always be avoided, where possible. Where an early closure is deemed necessary by the Head Teacher in conjunction with SLC HQ, this is unlikely to be before lunchtime and the school would not close until the last pupil is collected, regardless. The decision to close early will depend on the assessed safety and welfare of children, current weather conditions in the area, the weather forecast, road and traffic conditions and availability of staff. Under these circumstances we will use all communication channels available parents/carers should:-

- Check for updates on the school app
- Check for a school alert text
- Check the SLC (www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) and school website (www.hunter-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk) for updates
- Follow SLC (@SouthLanCouncil) and school twitter (@HunterPrimary)
- Check the Parent Council Facebook page
- Listen to local radio stations e.g. BBC Radio Scotland, Clyde 1, etc.

How can you help?

- Ensure the school holds **updated emergency contact telephone numbers** for you at all times (we often find these are out of date).
- Ensure you can **access messages on the school app and twitter @HunterPrimary**
- Where possible, have access to our **Parent Council Facebook page – Hunter Primary Parent Council**
- Please **clarify who will be collecting your child, if calling the school** in the event of a closure. We are unable to allow children to leave with other parents/carers without notification.
- Please **be patient when you arrive to collect your child**, we need to ensure all children leave the school safely and are accounted for.

2. Where the school is open but adverse weather results in some changes to normal routines

a) *There is patchy icy ground, light snow, or rain*

Where there is **patchy icy ground, light snow, or rain**, school start/finish routines will remain as normal. We advise that children are not brought to school until **just before the 9.00 am bell** and avoid entering playground spaces until then (unless attending Breakfast Club). On days of **heavy rain**, pupils will enter the building before the 9 am bell (**from 8.50 am**) where they will walk directly to their class and will be supervised by class monitors and Support Staff.

b) *There is heavy snow or mostly icy playground spaces*

In the instance of snow, **SLC Head Teachers have the authority to delay school opening until 10 am**. We will ensure this is communicated as quickly as possible (via the school app, Twitter, school website).

SLC ask Janitors to guarantee **one** clear pathway into the school. Clearly for a school like ours, with many access points/gates, this would be challenging. In instances of **heavy snow/mostly icy playground spaces** Davy (janitor) will endeavour to clear as much as he is able to. I ask you to be mindful of this as it is a big job for Davy, and he may not manage all access points/routes into the school.

Entry into the school building for pupils will be via the side Canteen door (Breakfast club door) which is closest to the pupil gate into the main playground.

FAQs

Q - Why is the Head Teacher unable to confirm first thing in the morning whether the school will remain open for the remainder of the day?

A - Due to disruption to transport links and difficult driving conditions brought about by adverse weather conditions, the Head Teacher will be unsure of staffing numbers before 9 a.m. meaning that a possible closure may follow. The Head Teacher may instead arrange for a later start e.g. 10 am, when the situation will be clearer.

Q - Should I take my child home again if I arrive at school and it is uncertain whether there will be a closure?

A - For safety reasons, a parent may wish to take their child home again where it is uncertain if the school will close. The Head Teacher will be aware that for many parents, this may cause less disruption than having to return later in the day should there be an early closure.

Q - Will my child be marked 'absent' if I follow safety advice and take him/her back home before 9 a.m?

A - If the school remains open for the remainder of the day, your child will be marked 'absent' as the school cannot record the attendance of any child who is not registered in class. Many parents, who are able, decide to return their child home for safety reasons however it should be noted that an absence will be recorded if the child is not in school when registers are taken and the school remains open into the afternoon. The school will communicate with parents as soon as more information is known and some parents might decide to return their child to school later in the morning, when it is known that the school will remain open.

Q - If I am informed that the school will close, will the school close before I can collect my child?

A - No. The school will not close until the last child is collected. The Head Teacher, or next available senior member of staff, will remain in school or contact parents regarding an agreed drop-off if necessary.

Q - Will my child's lessons take place as normal if an early closure is planned?

A - In extreme and rare circumstances, this cannot be guaranteed. Where staffing numbers are low, it may be necessary for children from different classes to be put together. The available teacher would provide appropriate activities for pupils under these unusual circumstances.

Q - Will my child be provided with work if the school is closed?

A – This will depend on the weather situation locally and sometimes nationally. Where the school does not open, class homework will be provided for pupils on Google Classroom.

Q - Will the school grounds be gritted during adverse weather?

A - In line with SLC Health & Safety requirements the janitor will ensure that there is a cleared path from the school gate (Crawford Drive) to the Breakfast club door and main door. Given the number of access points in our school, Davy will endeavour to do as much as possible. We ask you to be patient and understanding as this is a big job.

Q - If weather is adverse can my child wear part uniform to school e.g jogging bottoms and a school sweatshirt, etc?

A - Yes, wellbeing takes priority.

Q - Will my child be outside during break times in adverse weather?

A – This will be risk assessed on each occasion. However, although our Scottish weather is rarely reliable and pupils will continue to play outside during light rain, if weather is particularly adverse or playground areas are predominantly icy/dangerous, pupils will remain indoors. We find that this is usually disappointing to our pupils who would often love nothing more than to play outdoors in the snow or slide around however, we don't have capacity to change high numbers of 'wet' pupils and our risk assessment highlights that it would provide too high a risk regarding resulting injuries, to allow pupils to play outside.

It would be extremely helpful if you continue to allow your child to bring in a change of clothing in case of wet clothing. A pair of trousers in particular would be very helpful.