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'Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership'

Monday 26th February 2018

Snow/Poor Weather School Closures

Dear Parents / Carers,

With the 'Beast from the East' fast approaching and forecasts predicting snow in our area, I am reminding parents of the procedures and communication channels in the event of an emergency school closure.

Should the difficult decision be made to close the school, I would communicate with parents via Parent Mail/Texting and the BANES school closure website. Please check these systems regularly. This will be done by 7.00am at the latest, if not the day before. BANES will then share information with local radio and TV stations, to use as they will. Please contact the office to update your mobile phone details if they have changed. If we have heavy snow during the school day, it may be necessary to make a decision to send staff and pupils home part way through the day. We will contact you as soon as this becomes an issue. Local staff will stay and supervise pupils until they can be collected.

I thought that it might be helpful for me to clarify the reasons that schools are forced to make the decision to close in bad weather conditions. Primarily it is to ensure pupil safety. If schools cannot guarantee that staff will be in before the beginning of the day, the situation in school will be unsafe for the children.

- Unlike other working environments, school staff coming in late because of travel difficulties poses a serious safety issue for the children. (There may not be anyone to look after them.)
- The school site may not be able to be made safe-despite best efforts from our caretaker and staff
- As a secondary, though very important issue, schools would not want staff to put their personal safety at risk, not least since this could potentially affect children's learning in the longer term.

It is a very difficult decision to make to close a school, and one that we know inconveniences parents greatly. All schools, including Clutton, want to remain open. Often the decision has to be made early on the day of the closure. However, if at all possible schools try to make the decision to close the day before to give parents/carers sufficient time to make arrangements. The decision is based upon weather forecasts, where a school's staff live, and what the risk is to children in keeping the school open-possibly understaffed. Our teaching staff all live outside of the village, with some distances to travel into school.

Every school's situation is different, as is every snow day-what is right for one school may not be right for another.

Please keep a close eye on the school's communication systems in the event of poor weather conditions.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Ennew.
Head Teacher

