Medina College and The Island VI Form

Inclement Weather & Emergency Closure Statement

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1. Introduction

At the heart of our school is a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and inspiring environment where every member of our community is encouraged to thrive. Our values of **Ambition, Courage, Confidence and Kindness** underpin everything we do, shaping our curriculum, policies and decision-making.

- We are committed to fostering **ambition** by inspiring all students to aim high, embrace challenges and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- We nurture **courage** by encouraging students to take positive risks, persevere in the face of difficulty and stand up for what is right.
- We develop **confidence** by empowering students to believe in themselves, express their ideas and make meaningful contributions to school life and the wider community.
- We promote **kindness** by creating a culture of respect, empathy and inclusion, where everyone feels valued and belongs.

This statement reflects our commitment to these core values. They guide our expectations, inform our practices and ensure that every decision we make places the wellbeing, development and success of our staff and students at its centre.

Every student, every voice, every day.

Aims/Purpose

During adverse weather, it is the recommendation of the Department for Education to make every effort to keep schools open for teaching wherever possible. The decision to fully close a school will only be taken as a last resort further to an assessment which determines an unacceptable risk. This includes a consideration of staff and students safety both within our school site and off-site. This is particularly relevant to extreme heat conditions where students may be exposed to the sun for longer periods of time if not on school premises.

It is the decision of the school's Executive Headteacher and Heads of School as to whether the school closes following any unforeseen circumstances. This may include:

- Extreme weather conditions such as snow, heat, flooding, gale force winds
- A critical incident
- Exceptional circumstances such as heating breakdown, transport disruptions etc.

We will endeavour to keep the school open in all events, but the essential criteria for a school closure is Health and Safety. Relevant Health and Safety issues we consider before any closure are:

- Is it safe, as an employer, to declare the school open for students and staff?
- In the event of adverse weather:
    - Are staff who live distances from the school able to travel?
    - Can the number of children who attend school be adequately supervised?
    - Can the school grounds be made safe for all traffic (on foot, vehicles and cyclists)?

Before closure considerations such as access to drinking water, shade, ventilation/cooler areas, alteration of PE and outdoor activity, temporary relaxation of uniform requirements and particular consideration of students/staff who are medically vulnerable will be covered in ongoing risk assessment.

We will also consider the following in response to health and safety considerations:

- full closure
- partial/site-specific closure
- delayed opening/early closure
- restricted operation

Unless they are specifically informed otherwise, staff are expected to come into work as usual and are reminded of their duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions which includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions.

2. Adverse Weather

The Executive Headteacher and Heads of School will make a decision as early as possible, either in the evening or first thing in the morning before 7.00 am, after consulting with the site staff and checking the weather forecast. Once the decision has been made to close, there will be arrangements in place for effective communications to all staff members through cascaded phone calls.
The Executive Headteacher and Heads of School will ensure the Trust and Chair of Governors (IEB) are updated accordingly.

This information will then be available for students/parents/carers on our website, text, social media, local radio and the Local Authority's school closures web page.

Information on the school's closure can be accessed as follows:

- School Websites: https://www.medina.iow.sch.uk/ and https://www.theislandviform.org.uk/
- Isle of Wight Council: https://www.iow.gov.uk/
- Radio: https://www.iw https://www.countypress.co.uk/radio.co.uk/ and https://www.vectisradio.com/
- Local media: https://www.countypress.co.uk/

In the event of extreme weather changes, such as heavy snowfall, during the school day that causes us to be concerned about children's welfare in relation to returning home, we will update the Isle of Wight Local Authority website and inform the local radio stations mentioned above.

When severe weather has passed, the Headteacher and appropriate members of the Facilities team will conduct a visual check to the premises before announcing it will re-open.

It is always difficult to make the right decision due to the unpredictability of the weather; we will aim to do this as swiftly as we can. Please rest assured that any decisions taken will be based around ensuring that your children are kept as safe as possible.

The Executive Headteacher and Heads of School will ensure that all measures aimed at maximising the safety of the school will be in place. These measures include the purchase of sand/grit for paths in the school grounds, maintenance and improvements in air conditioned spaces and that boilers and pipes are maintained.

3. Emergency closures within the school day

The school will contact parents/carers through our normal channels e.g. text message and a posting on our website/social media.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that we have the most up to date contact information available via Arbor.

Once notified of a closure, it would be preferable for those parents who are coming to collect their children do so without telephoning the school first unless absolutely necessary so as to avoid blocking the telephone lines.

As a number of students rely on school transport, we will ensure continued communication throughout any event that may lead to a closure to ensure that students can access transport as necessary. This includes scenarios where school transport is

likely to be cancelled but the school is remaining open. Students will be allowed to leave the site early in these circumstances.

4. Recording absence

In circumstances where the school is officially closed, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code in accordance with current DfE guidance..

Where the school is not officially closed, parents should still endeavour to contact the academy to let us know they are on their way or if they are likely to be seriously delayed as we still have a statutory duty to record attendance correctly.

We appreciate that adverse or severe weather may mean that pupils arrive later than normal.

5. Extended closure

With any full closure, partial closure or restricted site access, the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School will review the health and safety risks and contingency plans on a daily basis. If the school is likely to be closed for consecutive days, our remote learning policy will be actioned.

6. Public exams

During exam periods the school's Exams Contingency Plan will apply and that every reasonable effort will be made to enable scheduled examinations to proceed, including use of alternative arrangements where appropriate. Trial exams will be rescheduled where appropriate.

For further details of our emergency planning response, please see emergency/Business continuity plan

Date of Next Review:
September 2028