



SCOIL NAOMH TREASA

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Wet & Extreme Weather Policy

1 Introduction

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Treasa acknowledges the exposed hill site of the school along with the nature of Irish weather. The aim of this policy is to put in place strategies to deal with extreme weather conditions and power failure. This policy also aims to ensure the safety of students, staff and the school community when inclement weather conditions arise.

2 Development of Policy

This policy was developed by the Board of Management following consultations with all members of the school community – school management, teachers and other relevant staff, parents, students and the school patron.

3 Background

Circulars 0011/1995 and 0072/2022 (Appendix B) set out the key information from the Department of Education's perspective on exceptional closures. School authorities retain discretion in relation to the need for and duration of exceptional closures. In general, a school closure, due to unforeseen circumstances, should be compensated for later in the school year or arrangements put in place that satisfy the Board of Management that the curriculum goals are met prioritising tuition over other non-tuition activities or the period of absence of pupils was utilised by the school staff for essential school activities other than teaching. Due to the emergence of Covid-19 and the development of technology, the opportunity for online learning is now available for extended school closures.

- ❖ Every effort must be made to have works of maintenance, building, etc. carried out during vacation periods.
- ❖ Subject to the requirement outlined above it is for school authorities alone to determine whether it is necessary to close due to adverse weather. In the case of a red warning, schools must close. In the case of an orange warning, local conditions may necessitate closure.
- ❖ Should some exceptional circumstances arise (for example, failure of the heating system or damage caused by vandalism), the Board of Management may close the school even if the school cannot be kept open for 182 days (Rule 60).
- ❖ "Exceptional cause" may include the following closures (Rule 60):
 - Inclement weather
 - Heating breakdown
 - Death of a teacher in the school

- Death of a pupil in the school
 - Death of a President of Ireland
- ❖ When the closing of a school is deemed necessary in the interests of public health, the written recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health should be obtained by the Chairperson of the Board and forwarded to the Department. The responsibility for closing the school rests with the Board of Management. (Rule 62)
 - ❖ Circular 28/94 advises management authorities that the Director of Community Care/Medical Officer of Health is the appropriate person to decide on matters in relation to public health. Directors of Community Care/Medical Officers of Health may delegate that authority to the Senior Area Medical Officers or the Area Medical Officers who normally are local General Practitioners.

4 Rationale

The need for the school to produce a policy on exceptional closures is due to possible eventualities such as:

- Inclement weather (heavy snowfalls, red level weather warnings, flooding, etc.)
- Heating breakdown
- Power failure/cut
- Critical Incident/death
- National Day of Mourning
- In the interests of public health as deemed necessary by the Area Medical Officer of the HSE
- Essential repairs that can't be completed during vacation periods.

5 Relationship to School Ethos

Scoil Naomh Treasa strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable.

6 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.

7 Policies and Procedures

Inclement weather

- **Wet Weather**

In general, children are granted access to school premises each morning at 8:50 a.m. by the supervising teacher.

On wet mornings, the teacher will allow the children access to the building to go directly to their classrooms where the supervising teacher will move from one room to another.

If it is raining at break times, the children will remain in their classrooms. The supervising staff will patrol the corridors keeping check on each class.

If the children are already playing outside when it begins to rain, a staff member will ring the bell to signal that play is ended and that the children should return indoors.

- **Snow / Frost / Ice**

If it is decided to open the school, the children will enter the school directly at 8:50 a.m. as is the case on wet days. Students will not be allowed out to play at break times if it is felt that there is a danger from slippery conditions.

Disconnection of Services

Where water or electricity services to the school are to be updated / repaired 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 text/email/Aladdin notification. However, in the event of emergency disconnection, advance warning may not be given.

Closing a school

The decision to close the school rests with the Board of Management taking into consideration the full guidance and direction available from the principal response agencies, especially An Garda Síochána. Any decision to close is taken in the interest of child safety, having assessed the local risks. The principal will consult with the chairperson of the Board of Management as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.

Some of the issues that the school will take into account include:

- conditions in the school itself
- capacity of the school to ensure the health and safety of students whilst in school
- ability of parents, students, staff to safely negotiate local road conditions to reach the school
- guidance and direction from the principal response agencies

If it is decided to close the school, a text message/email/Aladdin notification will also be sent to all families and staff. If the snowfall or icy conditions are prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents and staff will be informed of reopening dates through text message/email/Aladdin notification from school as well as on the school website.

Weather Warnings from Met Éireann

The school will monitor weather forecasts in order to be prepared for any severe weather which may affect the school. During periods of severe weather the school will assess the situation using the above guidance.

In recent years [Met Éireann](#) has introduced colour coded weather warnings as follows:

- Status Yellow – be aware
- Status Orange – be prepared
- Status Red – take action

The school will respond appropriately to such warnings using the above guidance.

Status Orange weather warnings may be applicable to the locality and require action to be taken because of the particular local circumstances. Any assessment taken by the school for actions necessary should be guided by local knowledge and experience and by way of advice from the principal response agencies.

Status Red weather warning

All weather warnings of Status Red will require some action on behalf of schools. The school will need to assess the potential impact of such weather events taking account of past experiences and in light of advice on the current event from the principal response agencies in their area.

A Status Red weather warning for heavy rain may be particularly relevant if the local roads flood. A Status Red warning related to ice or snow may cause local issues due to the location of the school and/or the routes taken to reach the school.

Status Red weather warning for wind

The school will note in particular Status Red weather warnings where strong winds or storm conditions are forecasted. Status Red weather warning for wind related conditions may be given in advance of a school opening or it may arise during the day while a school is underway.

- **Advance warning of Status Red**

Following consultation at a national level with the Office of Emergency Planning and the management bodies for schools, the Department of Education's advice to schools is that they should consider not opening where a Status Red weather warning related to wind is forecast to coincide with the period/s during which students and staff would be expected to be travelling to and from school.

Whether the school should open later in the day where an improvement to the weather is forecast is a decision which should be taken in consultation with An Garda Síochána, the local authorities, school transport services and other appropriate agencies based in the school's area.

- **Warning of Status Red that arises during the school day**

Where the Status Red weather warning related to wind is issued when the school is already underway with students and staff present, the school management will immediately contact Duleek Garda Síochána (041-9823222) and other appropriate agencies, if applicable, for advice on whether it may be safe to undertake journeys from the school or when such journeys should commence. Consideration should also be taken as to the safety of parents undertaking journeys to the school to collect children.

- **Health and safety**

Where a decision may have to be taken on health and safety grounds based on the advice available to the school for students and staff to re-main on the school premises during a Status Red warning related to wind, then the school will plan for such an eventuality by considering how students and staff can be accommodated within the school while awaiting an improvement in the weather. Such decisions should be taken based on the health and safety of all concerned taking account of the prevailing and forecast weather conditions in the vicinity of the school.

Status Red Advisory:

Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath	Dublin	(01) 8302222
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Louth, Monaghan, Cavan	Dundalk	(042) 9355069, (042) 9355065
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8 Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Exceptional closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command:

- The chairperson of BOM, in consultation with the principal, will be responsible for making a decision to close the school.
- School staff / BoM members may assume some responsibility, depending on the circumstances.
- Communication with HSE personnel and compliance with Health and Safety legislation may be necessary.
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents is of paramount importance. Parents will be informed by text/email/Aladdin notification if time allows. If parents cannot be contacted, phone calls/texts will be made by the school management team/secretary.
- Pupils who cannot be sent home (because of transport problems, parents working) will be supervised by teaching staff until the end of the day.

9 Implementation and Review

The policy has immediate effect and will be reviewed when necessary.

10 Ratification and Review

This Extreme weather / Wet weather policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27/04/2023.

Chairperson of BOM:

Signed:  Date: 27/04/2023

Principal:

Signed:  Date: 27/04/2023

