

Our Ref: PM/2019-10-07 Severe Weather Contacts
Date: 31 October 2019
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TO: ALL HEADTEACHERS

**LMS Document
2019/08**

Dear Colleagues

Advice for Schools on Coping with Severe Weather

I am sure that you have already been considering your school procedures in relation to severe weather and the impact it may have on the school. This last year saw very few school closures due to the weather but we can never be sure what the winter weather may have in store for us so please read this letter carefully and if you do need to close your school due to severe weather you will know who to contact and when.

The main thrust of advice is that schools should plan to remain open in all but the most exceptional circumstances. However, if it is necessary to close or partially close your school the following process should be followed.

Headteachers are in the best position to consider local circumstances and specific issues relating to the school, it is the decision of the headteacher whether to close the school, your Severe Weather Contact (SWC) is not able to advise on this. As soon as the decision has been made they should contact the **Severe Weather Contact (SWC) for your school cluster between 6.00am and 7.00am**. It is important that the decision is made as early as possible so that this information can be added to the school closure website, linked below.

Local press and radio stations will then use this website to broadcast information to the public. Schools are asked not to contact radio stations directly as this blocks telephone lines and causes confusion.

<http://schoolclosures.suffolk.gov.uk>

Staff and parents should be advised to listen to local radio stations and consult the website for updated information. However, it is important to remember that these procedures may not provide communication to all and that you should develop a local system of communicating information to staff and to parents who arrive at school despite these announcements. I know that several of you already do this very effectively.

For information, the website lists schools alphabetically by school phase, not area.

Enclosed with this advice is a list of the Severe Weather Contacts with contact details. It is important to appreciate that in some cases these are personal and confidential contacts which must only be used in these situations.

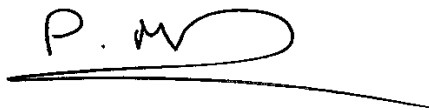
These procedures have been designed to deal with situations where we have a significant number of schools to close and phone lines may get busy in that peak period. If for any reason you are unable to contact your designated SWC it is advisable to contact one of the other SWCs as an alternative.

General Procedures for Emergency School Closures

- Make an early decision – between 6.00am and 7.00am.
- Contact your SWC who will expect your calls from 6.00am.
- Use local arrangements to back up these procedures.

Please note that these arrangements are only in regard to severe weather, for 'one off' closures due to property and maintenance issues please liaise with your relevant property contacts and inform the radio stations directly.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mumford', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Pete Mumford
Schools Planning Manager
Directorate for Children and Young People's Services

Severe Weather Contacts – Contact details

Please note it is important to update your information as SWC contacts may have changed for your school.

Pete Mumford	07872 415 274	Ipswich
Katie Deacon	07860 830 900	Felixstowe, Kesgrave, Leiston and Woodbridge
Gavin Turner	07912 999 288	Beccles, Debenham, Eye, Framlingham and Stradbroke
Chris Denny	07860 834 336	Bungay and Lowestoft
Jan Scott	07920 466 310	Needham Market, Stowmarket, Stowupland and Thurston,
Sarah Hammond	07843 344 701	East Bergholt, Great Cornard, Hadleigh, Holbrook and Sudbury
Ben Copeman	07540 672 832	Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill
Jo Fellowes	07843 344 706	Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket
Gavin Turner	07912 999 288	Children's Centres

Please ensure that you have a copy of these contacts available in school and at home so that you can refer to them as necessary. In the event of severe weather the contacts will be expecting calls from 6.00am onwards.