



SN Tulach Uí Chadhain

Exceptional Closures Policy

Introduction:

This policy has been drafted in consultation with teachers, parents and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde, Tulach Uí Chadhain. Exceptional closures may include closures due to severe weather conditions, loss of power or heat or other unforeseen circumstances. The decision to close the school rests with the Board of Management. Any decision to close is taken in the interest of children's safety and well-being, having assessed the local conditions and risks. In taking the decision to close the following factors will be taken into consideration:

1. Conditions in the school itself.
2. The capacity of the school to ensure the health and safety of all those present during the school day.
3. Local conditions that may affect the ability of parents and teachers to safely travel to the school building in the morning or afternoon.
4. Relevant weather or general health warnings by various authorities.

Aims:

This policy aims:

- To comply with Health and Safety measures and best practice
- To clarify and communicate the procedures around exceptional closures
- To ensure the health and safety all students, parents and staff

Procedures

- In the event of serious weather conditions, damage to the school, critical incidents or other serious events, the principal will consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management to establish the need to close the school on health and safety grounds.
- Where it is decided that closure is necessary this will be communicated to parents and staff via the Text a Parent service at the earliest possible opportunity. While every effort will be made to make a swift and early decision with regards to an unexpected closure this may not always be possible.
- The Department of Education and Skills recommends the closure of all schools in the event of a red weather warning. Closure will be confirmed by the school via the Text a Parent service as soon as the red weather warning is confirmed by Met Éireann

- Where possible an effort will be made to coordinate with other local schools in the decision to close.
- Where water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, 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 a Parent.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that current and correct contact details are held for all parents and staff. Any changes to contact details should be communicated to the school as soon as possible.

Contingency Arrangements

Guidance for schools in relation to making up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures is included in Department of Education Circular 5/2020. This guidance sets out a structured approach to determining the measures to be put in place to make up for time lost. The guidance provides that subject to consensus at Board level, any changes to normal practice that can be made to address the shortfalls should be put in place.

Examples of how this might be achieved include:

- prioritising tuition over other non-tuition activities
- reducing where possible the length of mock/house examinations
- consideration of whether learning in the classroom should be prioritised over school tours, etc

If necessary, the Board of Management should then identify any available discretionary days that the school had planned to close that could be made available to make up for time lost. Where the above measures are not considered adequate, contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to extensive or prolonged unforeseen school closures may now also include either or both of the following:

- The February mid-term break may be reduced by up to three days subject to the requirement that all schools must be closed on the Thursday and Friday of the week in which this break falls.
- The Easter break may be reduced by up to three days by the school remaining open up to and including the Wednesday immediately preceding the Easter weekend. All schools must be closed on the Thursday and Friday immediately preceding the Easter weekend and remain closed for the remainder of the Easter break

Ratification and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21/06/2021 and will be reviewed every 3 years. The latest review took place on 06/02/2025. The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association.

Signed



Date: 06/02/2025

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed



Date: 06/02/2025

School Principal