

How can we find out if the school is going to be closed due to bad weather?

As you will know from recent Parentmails / newsletters, Essex County Council procedures for informing parents about school closures in the event of severe weather have been changed. The key change is that closures will no longer be announced on the local radio stations. From now on we will inform you of school closure in the following ways:

- We will post school closure details onto the Essex County Council website. You should go to the following site to find out if the school is closed due to adverse weather conditions e.g. heavy snow <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx>
- We will also put a notice on the home page of our school website, www.sunnymede-jun.ik.org as soon as a decision has been made.
- We will also send a parentmail message as soon as possible.

Should we decide to open the school a little later than usual or close before 3:15 pm (e.g. to enable sufficient staff who live further afield to arrive safely in school), we will try to ensure that information is circulated as early as possible via Parentmail and the school website.

Please be aware that internet and phone lines can become very congested at these times and there may be some delay in them updating. Unfortunately, the decision not to use local radio means that those without internet connection may have difficulty accessing the information. We would ask you to spread the word amongst family and friends. If you are not signed up to Parentmail, now could be a good time to register so that you can be kept up-to-date without relying on word of mouth. Please speak to a member of staff in the school office.

What factors will be taken into consideration when deciding whether to close a school or to open later / close earlier?

Governors and staff at both Sunnymede Junior and Infant Schools will do their utmost to ensure that the schools remain open in the event of severe weather conditions. Whilst a decision to close one or both schools will never be taken lightly, a number of factors must be taken into consideration and each school's decision will be dependent on its own circumstances e.g. access to the school site, safety of the premises, staffing levels etc.

If we cannot maintain sufficient staffing levels (teachers, LSAs, MDAs, office and kitchen staff) due to problems with travel, we will have to close on Health and Safety grounds.

The site manager will attempt to clear paths from the school gates to the main entrances of each school. However, he will not be able to clear a path between the schools before the start of the day. Parents and children are advised to take great care at all times when accessing the site.

If the school opens, will children be able to play in the snow?

If conditions permit e.g. soft and fresh snow, children will be allowed to play in the snow at lunchtime. However, children MUST bring a full change of clothes and wellies / snow boots in order to play outside.

Will school dinners be available if the school stays open?

As long as we are able to receive deliveries of fresh food, we will continue to provide a hot meals service. However, there may be some deviation from the published menu. Notice will be given if we do not have sufficient kitchen staff and all children are required to bring a packed lunch.

Will Breakfast Club take place if the school remains open?

We will make every effort to open Breakfast Club if the school is going to remain open. However, please check your Parentmail before you bring your child to Breakfast Club.

Will after school clubs take place if the school remains open?

After school clubs are likely to be cancelled at short notice, even if the school is open. All cancellations will be communicated via Parentmail and it would be appreciated if parents/carers can inform non-subscribers.

Yours sincerely
Ronnie Branch
Headteacher

