

November 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND SCHOOL CLOSURE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

(PLEASE KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE)

As winter will shortly be upon us, I feel it is appropriate to inform you of the various steps we will take in Peterhead Academy in the event of a sudden deterioration in the weather or the need for a partial or complete closure of the school.

The safety of pupils must always be our prime consideration in adverse weather conditions and in preparing for such circumstances the co-operation and understanding of parents is essential. In adverse weather conditions, following consultation with bus companies, we may decide to send home some, or all, of our pupils who live outwith Peterhead. Only in the most extreme conditions or in the event of a prolonged failure of the power supply or when there are insufficient staff in attendance will the school be closed to all pupils.

In most circumstances, because of the numbers of pupils involved, it will not be possible to inform parents/carers in advance of our actions. Parents/Carers, therefore, can help us by ensuring that they give clear and precise instructions to their children about what they should do in any of the circumstances described later. It may be, however, that we need to contact individual parents/carers. Consequently, please ensure that the information we have on the following for your child is accurate and updated as required:

- **your home telephone number; mobile telephone number(s);**
- **your employer's telephone number(s);**
- **Emergency Contact's address and telephone number.**

Storm Accommodation Forms will be sent to appropriate S1 pupils within the next week and these must be returned to the General Office by your son/daughter. **Pupils from out of town must have an Emergency Accommodation Address in Peterhead.**

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS IN THE MORNING

Parents/Carers should always err on the side of safety in such circumstances and keep their children at home. Pupils should also be advised to wait no longer than 15 minutes past the normal time at their pick-up point for their transport to arrive before returning home. If their normal transport did not collect them in the morning, parents/carers must not make individual arrangements to get their children to school as the transport will not be operating after school.

DETERIORATION IN WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING THE DAY

Should weather conditions begin to deteriorate, we will be in regular contact with the bus companies with regard to road conditions and will take their advice about the need to send pupils home. Parents/Carers who live in outlying areas also contact the school to inform us about deteriorating road conditions and we find this information very helpful.

Some parents/carers from outlying areas who are concerned about the weather may wish to collect their children personally from school. This is perfectly in order but they must first report to the School Office so that we have a record of which pupils have left the school.

SENDING BUS PUPILS HOME

If we decide to send some, or all, of our bus pupils home, we will try to get the relevant buses to the Academy as quickly as possible. Although this can be relatively straightforward as far as “contract” buses are concerned, it can take a little longer to organise transport for pupils who travel by service buses.

Parents should be aware of the different requirements obtaining to “contract” and “service” buses. **Contract vehicles** are hired by the Education Authority to transport only school pupils. **Service Buses** are buses used by the general public and pupils using these are either provided with bus passes or do so as fare paying passengers. Parents/Carers should understand that these buses must follow a specified route and timetable and drivers cannot make special arrangements for the needs of individual passengers. Consequently, parents/carers must ensure that they give specific instructions to their child as to what (s)he should do after being dropped off by the service bus.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION ADDRESS

The deterioration in the weather may be such that it will be safer for pupils not to travel home but to go to their Emergency Accommodation Address in Peterhead. It is important, therefore, that the form issued to pupils living outside the town be returned as soon as possible.

CLOSURE OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL

Should the above be necessary, we will proceed as above for pupils entitled to transport. All other pupils will be dismissed directly from school. It is important, therefore, that your child is aware of your wishes as to where (s)he should report, e.g. your home, your place of work, home of a relative or friend.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

School Information Line

Aberdeenshire schools now have a telephone information service which can be used to give parents/carers information on school closure and/or school transport during times of adverse weather. This allows parents/carers to listen to a recorded message from their child's school.

How to use the service:

- Dial Aberdeenshire Council's access number - **0370 054 4999**
- When requested enter Peterhead Academy's pin number - **021110**
- You will now hear the school's name. Ensure that this is correct before proceeding.

Press 1 to hear Peterhead Academy's message about the adverse weather for example whether or not the school is to close or if transport arrangements have been affected.

Press 4 to enter the pin number for another school within Aberdeenshire. Parents/Carers may have children who attend different schools, e.g. a local primary school. This option allows them to move from one school's messaging service to another without having to dial in again.

Arrangements will also be made to broadcast relevant information via the news bulletins on the local radio stations.

- **Waves Radio**
- **Northsound Radio**

Aberdeenshire School Closures System (Website)

Aberdeenshire council has changed the way parents receive online alerts about school closures and changes to school transport. You can now sign up for these notifications through myaccount on the Aberdeenshire Council website – if you currently pay for school meals online, you will already be registered.

myaccount is a simple, secure way of accessing a range of Scottish public services using just one username and password and 13,000 parents across Aberdeenshire are already enjoying the benefits of it.

As well as being able to sign up for alerts, your home page will automatically give you handy information such as your bin collection days, where your nearest recycling centre is and the names of your local councillors.

So, if you want to be kept up-to-date and take advantage of the other myaccount benefits, sign up to the new system by going to the Aberdeenshire Council website and clicking on the red My Aberdeenshire button in the top right-hand corner.

We will also attempt to keep you updated using Groupcall text messaging, although please note this is dependant on appropriate staff getting to the Academy. Please ensure we have your up-to-date mobile telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Shona Sellers
Head Teacher