**Adverse Weather and Emergency Closure Policy**

It is the policy of St. Joseph’s Primary School, Killough to make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Principal.

The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely (acceptable PTR).
2. Conditions on site are dangerous:

**• Can pupils and staff access the school building safely?**

**• Can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?**

**• In an emergency, could the Emergency services access the school?**

**• Is the area designated for disembarkation from transport safe for pupils?**

1. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

**Following a detailed Risk assessment carried out by the Principal, if the school is to close:**

1. The closure will be reported to the Education Authority (South Eastern Region) and DENI by the Principal.

This information will be displayed to the public via the school’s website:

stjosephspskillough.com and using the school social media/Facebook page.

The media (BBC Radio Ulster, Downtown Radio and Cool FM) will be informed and *may* then broadcast details.

1. Parents will be alerted to the closure using the Text Message service activated by the Principal once the closure has been reported to the Education Authority.

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions or if an emergency evacuation occurs, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places considerable difficulties upon parents. However, parents are expected to keep their mobile phone details up to date and check their text messages, the website, social media and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciated that during bad weather or during an emergency situation some children may arrive at school later than normal; parents/carers should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises that there will isolated instances where families are cut off during adverse weather, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents/carers should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Education and Welfare Service. Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

In the event of the school having to close during the school day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances including an emergency situation, parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to collect their children. Such an early release will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents/carers, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared. Do remain dangerous. Children will be reminded of this at assembly.

Before and after school opening hours parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school carpark/playground.

In icy conditions, The Building Supervisor will salt pedestrian/access routes. It is the responsibility of the Building Supervisor to Risk Assess the outdoor areas to ensure the safety of pupils should for example the ground freeze during the day and some pathways or grounds are too dangerous to pass through or along. The Building Supervisor will consult and liaise with the principal throughout all adverse weather periods and emergency situations.

Where necessary, essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible and salted throughout the day. On school days where the school is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and icy weather on a daily basis by thr Building Supervisor, so as to keep pathways clear and prevent a build up of ice and snow.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to pupils throughout the day. This will be at the principal’s discretion and taking into account advice from the Building Supervisor.

In the Principal’s absence the Senior Teachers on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_