Cumbria County Council

Closures Advice for Schools

There are two types of school closures, those that are planned and those that are unscheduled but required due to an emergency. Below you will find advice on how to inform the Local Authority and other relevant persons of each.

IMPORTANT - The online school closures notification tool (accessible via the schools portal) should not be used for planned or scheduled closures. This is to notify emergency closures only, usually due to weather or incident where there is less than 24hrs notice.

Planned Whole or Partial Closures/Changes to Term Dates

Community and Controlled Schools should follow the term dates as set by the LA. All maintained schools are required by law to open for the purpose of educating pupils for 190 days (or 380 sessions) in a year. If a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions because of an unavoidable event, it should find a practical way of holding extra sessions. If it cannot find a practical way of doing this then it is not required to make up the lost sessions.

Aided and Foundation Schools set their own dates but meet any additional transport or catering costs if they deviate from the LA's set dates. Academies also set their own dates. It is important for schools to notify the LA if your term dates days will differ from those directed by the LA.

If a school wants to close for an additional closure day over and above the statutory five days, this can only be done in exceptional circumstances.

For certain building projects or necessary works, it may be possible for the County Council to support a closure day to allow the school to work with the Council to manage any necessary issue but again this is supported only in exceptional circumstances.

Schools who wish to notify or discuss a **planned** full or partial closure you must contact the Local Authority in the first instance - You can do this via the Health and Safety Team, who will advise and direct requests to the Assistant Director of Schools and Learning where required. The Health and Safety Team can be contacted on **01228 221616** or by e-mail: **healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk**

Admission Registers - Code # This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

The above procedure is for planned closures only. Please do not use it to report emergency or unplanned/ unscheduled closures such as those due to adverse weather or emergency incident. For information on how to report unplanned closures **please follow our emergency school closures process below.**

Emergency and Unscheduled Closures

It will generally be up to the Head to determine whether or not their school needs to close in an emergency. Such emergencies and unscheduled events might include weather conditions, gas leak or loss of services, e.g. heating, water, electricity. You should ascertain from any agencies involved, e.g. United Utilities, National Grid etc, the likely duration of the fault prior to the decision to close being made. In coming to a decision to close, the health and safety of the children and staff is paramount and you should consider local factors and conditions.

Reporting Emergency and Unscheduled Closures Online via the School Portal

The County Council operates an **online emergency school closures tool** allowing schools to update their school status directly from the schools' portal. You login as normal and will be able to change your setting from 'Open' to 'Closed' and complete the reasons and expected duration of your closure. This will ensure that your schools status is updated on Cumbria County Council's website; **www.cumbria.gov.uk**