

Dear Parents and Carers

Adverse Weather and School Closure

First of all I need to assure you that the school will only close if the building is not safe or routes home for children are threatened, ie bridges closed or routes flooded.

Closure before the start of the school day due to severe weather

If we were to close the school before school starts we will inform you in the following ways:

1. A message will appear on the school's website (www.castleschool.co.uk) and Twitter account (www.twitter.com/thecastleschool) by 7:30 am each day (although we will aim to be sooner) and we will update the website and Twitter with information, as far as possible, during the day.
2. A text message and email will be sent to all parents, whose details we have and that are up to date, by or shortly after 7.30am. Please let us have your up to date contact details if you have not already done so.
3. Broadcasts by the following Radio Stations –

Somerset Sound 1566MHz
Heart FM 102.6FM [96.5FM Taunton Area].

What we will always endeavour to do is remain open for Year 11s in the first instance because they are preparing for GCSEs, and if we can, we will stay open for Year 7s as we know that will assist parents who work.

Closure during the school day:

Our priority is to keep all students calm and safe, therefore, please follow these instructions so we can keep the children calm and reassured that they are safe. **DO NOT phone/text your child/ren as it causes them alarm and other children to panic.**

If for any reason weather forces us to close during the school day we will inform you in the following way:

1. We will put information on our website and Twitter. Those parents who have given us their email addresses and text contacts, we will send you a message. This message will direct you to the school website which is where we will put all advice/instructions. **Again, please do not text or phone your child at this point as it will cause panic and over-excitement.** I have attached a flow chart which I hope will reassure you about what will happen. We do need to do things in an orderly and safe fashion, as I know you will appreciate.
2. Normally the school buses will arrive early to ensure that students who catch the bus are able to get home. This is at the bus company's discretion and we usually have a call from them telling us they will arrive early. We will let you know if this is the case.
3. If you absolutely have to collect your child, you should phone the school office ahead so that we can inform your child and have them waiting for you. You may have to wait patiently whilst we contact your child. **Do not contact your child directly during lessons as this causes alarm and panic.** We may suggest that you do so if it is during lunchtime only.
4. **Parents will be unable to park at the front of school or use the car park** as we need to maintain emergency access and to enable buses to park safely. Heron Drive may be the safest and easiest place to park if you need to collect your child/ren.

5. As most of our students are able to walk to and from school, we will stay open for as long as we possibly can. If we can remain open, there may not be enough teachers to teach lessons, but we will provide supervised activities for Years 10 and 11 in the main hall and for Years 7, 8 and 9 in the sports hall for as long as we can do safely, so that students can remain in school even though normal lessons will be disrupted. This is to allow parents the comfort of knowing their children are safe and supervised. **Children will not be allowed to leave school with a text or phone call from parents. If they do so, this will be counted as truancy and the absence will be unauthorised. This is to ensure that we know where the children are and that we are able to safeguard them.**
6. If it becomes clear, in the unlikely event of extreme and dangerous weather, that we are forced to close the school completely, we will post this on the website and Twitter and text/email all parents for whom we have these details. However, we will provide a safe place for students to wait and this will be either the library or the main hall. We will conduct an organised and safe dismissal having given parents as much notice as possible. If for any reason, you are anxious about your child making his or her own way home, you can contact the school and we will either try to arrange other children to escort them or they can stay in the library which will be supervised until you can collect them.

Transporting Somerset has set up a website to advise parents about bus routes out of operation or restricted routes. In an effort to improve communication with parents, Transporting Somerset has asked for parents to look at their website (www.somerset.gov.uk/badweathertransport) before phoning for information.

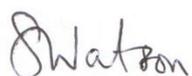
Everything reasonably possible will be done to ensure children's safety and well-being.

If you do not receive information from the school to the contrary, please assume that school will be open as usual.

In times of adverse weather, students are permitted to wear suitable footwear (eg wellington boots, trainers) on the way to and from school but will need to bring their school shoes to change into once in school. May I remind you that we ask parents not to drive down Longrun Drive to the front of the school because it adds to congestion and causes problems. In emergencies such as school closure, the drive to the school will be closed.

Thank you for your support with this. Our intention is to ensure all students are safe and are not alarmed in any way.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S Watson
Headteacher