



# CMPs



*Aspiring to learn, care and grow together*

## **SEVERE WEATHER GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

Dear Parents / Carers,

As we move into the winter months, the potential for severe weather increases. There appear to be more named storms that cause schools to close early or not open at all. Snow and ice may also impact services.

In the event of severe weather, Carrickfergus Model will remain open unless the Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team decides that we cannot operate safely and effectively or that the risks of continuing to operate are such that it is in the best interests of the pupils, staff and parents to close.

The decision as to whether to stay open or close is a difficult one for a school to make and is not taken lightly. Whilst we appreciate that school closure may be an inconvenience to parents/carers, pupil safety is our priority and we ask for your understanding in this.

Some examples of what may lead to a school closure are:

- The school building has become unfit for use eg heating breakdown, hazardous movement around school due to snow and / or ice, flood damage or structural damage etc.
- Freezing conditions, ice and snow resulting in dangerous and disrupted roads to the extent that staff and pupils cannot get to school.
- The number of staff able to get to school is inadequate to continue operating.
- The weather conditions and the short term outlook strongly suggest a rapid deterioration in conditions that may significantly effect the safe travel of children and staff on their homework journey.
- A direction from the Department of Education / Education Authority that schools must close due to a named storm or other matter.

The nature of the climate in Northern Ireland means that the weather conditions can change and develop very rapidly and decisions about school closure are often taken at short notice. Sometimes a severe weather forecast doesn't cause much disruption in a particular area and yet in another locality nearby, conditions can be much more severe.

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*Carrickfergus Model  
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*Keep in Touch*

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*On the Web*

Website: <https://www.carrickmodelps.co.uk>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CarrickfergusModel>  
Instagram: @carrickmodbt38



CMPS



## *Aspiring to learn, care and grow together*

We do our best to make the right judgement call and inform parents as quickly as possible. If we do have to close we will use the following methods:

- Text Message from school - please ensure you keep us updated with number changes
- ParentMail - please have notifications switched on
- Seesaw - please ensure you can log on
- Department of Education - [www.nidirect.gov.uk/school-closures](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/school-closures)
- Local Media - [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)
- Our Social Media Channels if required
- Parents can phone / email school - although in such situation, the phone line is usually busy

In severe weather when school is open, we will risk assess areas in school that may need gritted or made safe in other ways. Please bear in mind that because our school opens at 8.00am for Breakfast club and 8.30am for other pupils it is not always possible for the whole school to be gritted on time. Staff will always do their best to direct pupils safely and Mrs Miller will try to keep the back gate open a little later on bad mornings or in the event of a known traffic accident that is affecting the school run.

If the school has to close early senior staff will ensure that children are looked after until they are collected but they too will need to get home safely.

Ultimately, it is up to individual parents to make a judgement on whether they feel it is safe to travel to school. It goes without saying that this decision is often more complex when travelling with children. Whilst we promote and celebrate good attendance this should not be a deciding factor on whether to travel.

This is a complex matter and I would ask that parents are understanding of any decision that is made. Sometimes the decision will be wrong as things don't turn out to be too bad but other times the decision will be right and in the best interest of everyone. Thank you!

**Mrs Miller (Principal)**

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