***Policy on Emergency Closures***

***Saint Michael’s N.S.***

***Castletown Geoghegan***

**Policy on Emergency Closures**

**Introduction**

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management. It was circulated to the entire school community in Castletown.

**Rationale:**

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures in recent years is primarily due to:

* Upgrading of the local water scheme on a phased basis which has led to supplies being disconnected on a number of occasions recently
* Inclement weather, such as heavy snow falls, etc.
* Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school, which may necessitate closure on Health and Safety grounds.

**Relationship to School Ethos:**

St Michael’s N.S. strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

**Aims and Objectives:**

* To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises
* To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children
* To comply with Health and Safety legislation.

**Procedures:**

**Adverse weather conditions which may invoke an emergency closure:**

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal shall consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management as soon as is feasible, and a decision will be made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If it is decided to close the school, all parents will be contacted via message through Aladdin Connect by the Principal or another designated person, confirming the details of the school closure. If the adverse weather conditions are prolonged over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents will be informed of re-opening dates through the use of messaging through Aladdin Connect.

The procedures in place for adverse weather conditions are generally replicated in the event of storms/lightning i.e. parents are contacted via message through Aladdin Connect and informed that the school will remain closed. If the school has already opened and is in operation when high winds etc. occur and remaining on the premises is a risk to all – teachers will remain on the premises until all the children have been collected by either parents/guardians.

**Disconnection of Services:**

Whether water or electricity services to the school are to be disconnected, a week’s notification is normally given to the school authorities. This enables the school to furnish the parent body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via message through Aladdin Connect.

In terms of water services being disconnected, we can confirm that we have enough water in the tanks in the attic to allow us to remain open until 1.40pm. All parents shall collect their children at 1.40pm unless notified otherwise. Should the water services be reconnected before 1.40pm and the tanks are refilled, the school will remain open until 2.40pm as normal. Correspondence will be made to parents in relation to this matter via Aladdin Connect during the school day. Parents are asked to have arrangements in place for collecting their children on such days and also that they are available to receive updates via Aladdin Connect throughout the day.

**Critical Incident/Death:**

In some instances the school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident or death of a staff member, Board of Management member or pupil. Parents are informed of such closures by message through Aladdin Connect. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff and BoM or Parents Association if issues such as church services, Guards of Honour, readings or counselling is required (See Critical Incident Policy).

**Please note:**

All half days and in-service closures are notified to parents at least two weeks in advance where possible. In some cases, this time frame may be shorter for various reasons.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Emergency closures in the school place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school chain of command, most notably:

* The Chairperson
* The Principal

and other affected members of staff and BoM. Emergency closures are dependent on:

* Positive school community feedback
* Compliance with Health and Safety legislation
* Maintaining a safe school environment for all staff, children and parents.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy has been in operation in the school since January 2009 and updated in 2023, and ratified at the following BoM meeting.

Implementation and Review:

This policy has been implemented since January 2009, has been reviewed in 2023 and will be reviewed in the light of unplanned events that lead to unscheduled school closures.

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

Chairperson, Board of Management

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

Principal