

EMERGENCY SCHOOLS CLOSURE GUIDANCE (Updated April 2026)

In the event of an emergency occurring, or in severe weather conditions, the decision about whether to close the school is made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors. It is policy on the Island not to declare a blanket closure. It is based on local conditions and often depends on whether enough teachers have been able to get to the school to ensure pupil safety. Some might be able to open; others nearby might be forced to close. Where members of teaching staff are unable to get to their own school, they should telephone the nearest school to their home address to offer what help they can.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING SEVERE WEATHER?

Headteachers are advised to inform the local authority of the decision to open, close or partially close **at the earliest possible opportunity** and **no later than 7.30am**.

The local authority contact numbers are:

- **Jade Kennett** - **07818 044526**
- **Emma Goldring** - **07834 413030**
- **Martin Neville** - **07972 243640**

Schools are required to **always** contact the local authority (using the contact numbers above) and provide information on the status of the school, **even if the school is remaining open**.

Once the report of a school closure has been notified, the information will be passed to the council's Media Relations Team by our department:-

media@iow.gov.uk

Tel: 01983 823793

The Media Relations team will contact all local media and will regularly update a school closures list on the www.iwight.com website and on the council's Facebook and Twitter pages. **Under no circumstances should headteachers contact the local media**. This is to ensure the messages to parents are joined up and consistent and are not contradictory. The media have been briefed that official information about closures will come direct from the council.

If you need to close or partially close the school during the day, please contact a member of the council's Schools & Learning Team on **Tel: 01983 821000; Emma Goldring Ext 6157, Helen White, Ext 6588 or Priya Boorle 07970 009804**.

Headteachers should be advised to arrange for a brief note to be written, giving their reasons for the closure, to be forwarded to the chief executive as quickly as possible.

Caretakers have a custodial duty in respect of their premises and at schools which are not fitted with 'froststats' should take such action as may be necessary in the light of forecast of **imminent severe weather** to avert freezing of water systems within the school. This should include, even where 'froststats' are fitted, visiting the premises in severe weather occurring at weekends or during holiday periods to ascertain the position.

INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY SITUATION: SCHOOL IN SESSION

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency situation occurring whilst the school is in session, it is for the Headteacher to decide whether and when, in the interests of safety and welfare of children, it is necessary to close the school and make arrangements to get the children home. If a decision is taken to close, a member of school staff should call the Local Authority (on one of the numbers listed above) to advise of the decision. The Local Authority will inform the media and arrange for the information to be added on the iowight.com website.

In the event of a Headteacher feeling obliged to decide that there is no alternative but to close the school, the following factors will need to be borne in mind:

- The safety and welfare of children must be the prime consideration.
- Only in very exceptional circumstances should a school be closed before children have taken their mid-day meal.
- Heads of primary schools in particular will wish to satisfy themselves that no child is sent away from school to an empty home.
- It is the Headteacher's responsibility to inform the catering supplier of any closure and the School Transport Service if necessary.

➤ School Transport Service: 8.30am-4.30pm (Mon-Fri) – 01983 823780

Out of Hours Cover: Abbie Cook 07926 864698 or Sarah Linington 07816 054108

➤ Email: transport.info@iow.gov.uk

- An attempt should be made to contact any expected callers.

SCHOOL CLOSURES – PROCESS FOR SCHOOLS (Updated April 2026)

Strategic Development Team – Schools and Learning Division

Decision to close the school is taken by the
Headteacher and Chair of Governors

School notifies the Local Authority of the closure
by 7.30am to:

Jade Kennett – 07818 044526
or
Emma Goldring – 07834 413030
or
Martin Neville – 07972 243640

School Transport Service

Mon-Fri 8.30am-4.30pm -
01983 823780

Out of Hours Cover: Abbie Cook
07926 864698 or Sarah
Linington 07816 054108

School should also contact their
catering provider

School produces a briefing note
for Chief Executive / Schools
and Learning Division outlining
reasons for closure

School completes a report for the
Governing Body

Strategic Development Team
notifies Media & Communications
Team who will share school
closures information on
www.iow.gov.uk, Facebook &
Twitter websites

Copy email sent to
emergency.management@iow.gov.uk

Action Log updated