

SCHOOLS

School Closures

The decision to close a school rests with the school management authority. Any decision to close is taken in the interest of children safety, having assessed the local risks and having consulted, as appropriate with school transport operators.

Some of the issues that schools take into account include:

- conditions in the school itself,
- the capacity of the school to ensure the health and safety of students whilst in school, and
- the ability of parents, students, staff and school transport services to safely negotiate local road conditions to reach the school.

While schools in an area will normally try to co-ordinate their decisions, the individual circumstances can vary between individual schools in close proximity and may lead to different decisions being taken by schools.

Contacting Parents

If your child's school decides to close on the grounds of safety, the school will make all efforts to contact you. Most schools use a text messaging service to communicate with parents. Local radio or the school's website may also be used to alert parents to a school closure.

Making Up for Days Lost

Decisions on how to make up for lost tuition will be taken locally by the school authority, following their assessment of tuition lost. The Department of Education and Skills has published guidance for schools in relation to making up for time lost due to unforeseen closures, including severe weather. This guidance is set out in Circular 0034/2011 and is available on the Department's website, www.education.ie

This guidance sets out a structured approach to determining the measures to be put in place to make up for time lost and provides that where other measures are not considered adequate, the school may decide to shorten the February mid-term break by up to three days and/or the Easter break by up to three days having taken account of the implications of any measures identified for pupils, teachers, parents and other staff and also other parties such as school transport, bus escorts, traffic wardens and visitors to the school.

Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations

If your child is in a Junior or Leaving Certificate class, they may be due to take an oral or practical test, during the time a school is closed during severe weather. If this happens, the State Examinations Commission will communicate with your child's school to put in place alternative arrangements.

Who should I contact if I need more information?

If you need further information about your child's school during severe weather, you should contact your child's school to discuss the arrangements and plans in place locally. Contact telephone numbers and details for Primary and Post-Primary Schools are available from the website www.education.ie

Parents with children travelling under the School Transport Scheme should contact their local Bus Eireann School Transport Office for an update on the operation of their school bus service. Bus Eireann also update local radio stations regularly during spells of severe weather that are likely to disrupt school bus services and post notices on the Bus Eireann website, www.buseireann.ie

Contact numbers for local Bus Eireann School Transport Offices

For School Transport Scheme services in counties	Contact the School Transport Office in	Phone No
Westmeath, Longford, Offaly, Roscommon, Laois	Athlone	090 6473277
Mayo	Ballina	096 20224 096 71816
Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath	Dublin	01 7032472 01 7032427
Louth, Monaghan, Cavan	Dundalk	042 9355062 042 9355065
Cork	Cork	021 4557137 021 4557129
Clare, Tipperary (North), Limerick	Limerick	061 217484
Galway	Galway	091 537694
Sligo, Leitrim	Sligo	071 9160440
Donegal	Stranorlar	074 9131008
Waterford, Tipperary (South), Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford	Waterford	051 873401 051 317872
Kerry	Tralee	066 7164750