



Document name	BETNS Emergency School Closure Policy
Version reference	1.0
Nature of revision	New Policy
Document owner	Board of Management
Approved by	Board of Management
Ratified on	14. 1. 2026
Review date	January 2029

Introduction:

The school policy on emergency closures was drafted as a whole school exercise, involving consultation with the staff, parents / guardians and Board of Management. It will be circulated to the entire school community via the school website when ratified.

Rationale:

The need for the school to produce a policy on emergency closures is primarily, but not exclusively, due to:

- Inclement weather, such as heavy snowfalls, high winds etc.
- Leaks in the local water scheme which cause a Health & Safety Issue regarding access to toilets
- Break down in the heating system or electricity supply
- Serious damage to the school building
- Building programmes and alterations to the design of the school which may necessitate unscheduled closures on Health and Safety grounds
- Critical Incident

Relationship to School Ethos:

Ballinteer Educate Together National School strives to provide a child-friendly, secure and safe learning environment catering to the needs of all pupils, whilst also striving to ensure that staff and visitors can access a safe and welcoming work environment. This policy is founded on respect for the individual, child or adult, and is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference.

Aims and Objectives of the policy:

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils , staff and visitors while on the school premises

- To ensure a safe, child-friendly school environment available to all children
- To conform to Health and Safety legislation

1. Unplanned Closures:

Weather Related Closures

In the event of a heavy snowfall, the Principal consults with the Chairperson of the Board of Management as soon as is feasible, and a decision is made as to whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If it is decided to close the school, the school authorities contact all school staff and parents/guardians by text and email to inform them that the school will not be opening. If the weather-related incident lasts over a number of days and the school is closed indefinitely, parents/ guardians will be informed of reopening dates by email and through the school website.

Weather related closures may also follow directives from the Department of Education and Youth .

Unexpected loss of services

Where the school is not notified regarding the loss of electricity or water services, the principal will endeavour to determine the extent of the interruption to the service. Following consultation with the Health and Safety Officer on staff and the Chairperson of the Board of Management regarding the health and safety implications of the loss in service, a decision may be taken to notify the parents/guardians of the need to close the school. Staff will remain on the premises until children have been collected by their parents/guardians.

Critical Incident/Death

The school might remain closed for pupils in the event of a critical incident. Parents / guardians are informed of such closures by whichever means is deemed appropriate by the Critical Incident Management Team. In this particular instance, the school may remain open to staff, Board of Management, Parent Teacher Association or Critical Incident Management Team, if issues such as funeral services, liaison with media or counselling need to be addressed (See Critical Incident Policy).

2. Dismissal Procedures

To ensure the safe and orderly evacuation of the school building, three designated exit doors are used. Pupils exit the building through the door they normally use at dismissal time, unless otherwise directed by staff.

Class teachers lead and supervise their own classes during the dismissal time, ensuring pupils follow instructions at all times.

Other staff are deployed to support the safe transition of pupils throughout the building and at exit points.

WhatsApp communication groups are established on the day, where necessary, to facilitate effective communication and coordination of supervision arrangements. Such groups could be set up for the three exit doors. Pupils from the Autism classes will exit the building via their usual exit door.

Staff are expected to remain onsite unless otherwise directed by the Principal.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency closures place particular responsibilities on various personnel within the school. These may include:

- **Principal & Chairperson of Board of Management:** Make closure decisions and oversee communication
- **Health & Safety Officers:** Advise on risks relating to school infrastructure
- **School Staff:** Ensure pupil safety and follow communication procedures
- **Parents/Guardians:** Ensure the school has up-to-date contact details.

Principal

- Overall responsibility for coordinating the dismissal.
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- Communication procedure for the day. Assign three leads, one for each exit door.
- Present at an exit point, when possible, to oversee procedures and ensure pupil safety.

Class Teachers

Responsible for supervising their own classes.

Classes may be combined if necessary to facilitate safe supervision and dismissal.

Special Education Teachers (SET)s

Assigned to supervise designated exit doors.

Two SET teachers will be allocated to each exit door, supporting pupil flow and safety.

Additional Needs Assistants (ANA)s

Assigned to supervise designated exit doors.

Some ANA staff will be required to remain with pupils who have high priority care or supervision needs.

A total of **four staff members** will be assigned for the main exit door to support infant children, **three staff members per other exit door** will be assigned, comprising SET staff and/or other designated

personnel, under the direction of the Principal.

School Secretaries

Responsible for manning the school office, managing communications, and responding to queries.

4. Planned Closures:

Disconnection of Services

Where 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 communicate with the parent/guardian body with the relevant advance warning of such closures via email.

Building Programmes

The Health and Safety Officer on the Board of Management will consult with on-site Health and Safety personnel to ensure compliance with any statutory obligations in this regard.

Parents/guardians will be briefed on such matters and the health and safety of pupils and staff will be paramount in any decisions made regarding closure in such circumstances.

Department of Education and Youth Guidelines

In cases where the Department of Education and Youth issue a directive for all schools to close, due to adverse weather conditions, Ballinteer ETNS will comply with these announcements and parents/guardians will be informed via email and school website.

5. Contingency arrangements to address lost learning time

In accordance with [Circular 0072/2022](#) and associated guidance, the school will take steps to address lost instructional time due to unforeseen closures. These may include:

- Prioritising tuition over non-core activities
- Reviewing the school calendar to identify discretionary days
- Reducing the February or spring breaks (while meeting minimum closure requirements). Changes to the calendar will be communicated to parents/guardians with adequate notice.

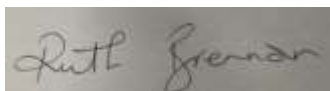
6. Ratification, Communication and Review:

The policy was ratified on the date below. The policy will be distributed to all individuals involved in the consultation process of its development. It will be available electronically on the school website for access at any time. It will be reviewed as necessary but no later than 2028.

Signed:  _

Date 20/01/2026

Maeve McCarthy Chairperson

Signed: 

Date: 20/01/2026

Ruth Brennan Principal