

Ref: R-M/T-F

November 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians

Following Storm Ciaran, I write to remind parents of the procedure for notification of school closure in severe weather conditions and to explain some of the factors I will be taking into consideration when making a decision.

If the decision is made to close the school for the whole day or to delay the start of the school day because of adverse weather conditions, notification will be sent to parents, carers and guardians via email using *SchoolComms*. We will also put a notification on the school's website at www.northgate.suffolk.sch.uk.

In the event of any difficulty seeking information from the school, you will be able to see our status displayed at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-closures>.

Local radio stations may also broadcast information about school closures, but there is usually a time-lag between a decision being taken and broadcast, or information being displayed on others' websites. Therefore, if in doubt, go by what is sent to you via email and/or published on our school website.

I would like to stress that full closure of the school is not a decision that is taken lightly by Headteachers. As a group, we dislike having to decide before 7.00am as that has the potential to make us appear foolish later that same day! Parental opinion is typically split, with roughly equal numbers complaining, for example, on snowy days if I close the school or keep it open.

In making my decision prior to the start of a school day I will consider the safety of the school site (which will be fully inspected) and the likely danger to students and staff in making their journey to school. I have to keep in mind that while many of our Year 7 to 11 students can travel to school on foot, the vast majority of our staff cannot. The likelihood of having inadequate supervision clearly adds to safety concerns when conditions are severe and when student behaviour is influenced by the weather, for example, snow.

If the school is open at the start of the day, and the weather starts to deteriorate severely during the day, my consideration will be slightly different. In this situation I will weigh up the relative safety of students who are already on the site, compared to their likely safety if sent home. I will also try to judge if their journey home is likely to be more dangerous if delayed until the end of the school day. In this respect the decision may be different for Sixth Form students, many of whom travel long distances to get to and from Northgate each day.



NORTHGATE
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Headteacher:
Miss Rowena Mackie

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Northgate safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils and requires all staff and visitors to share this commitment.

If the decision is made to close the school part-way through the day students will be told they can leave if they have immediate access to their own home. If not, they will be able to stay in the school library, where they will be supervised until a parent arrives to collect them or the normal time for the end of school day is reached. For safety reasons we discourage students from leaving school to go anywhere other than their own home and I would urge you to reinforce this message.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RMackie". The letters are cursive and connected, with a small dot above the 'i'.

Miss R Mackie
Headteacher