

Via Red Bag
Heads of all Schools

Sir Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director, Children & Young
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Our ref: SC/LC
Contact: Lisa Cowley
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Dear Colleague

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – IMPORTANT NOTICES

I am writing to schools to notify you of the emergency closure password to be used for unavoidable school closures. The password for all media contacts with effect from **1 December 2025** will be **RAINBOW**. This password will be in use until 1 December 2026 unless informed otherwise.

The procedure for **unavoidable school closures** together with emergency contact numbers for the Council and local radio stations is attached. Advice regarding potential closures on public health grounds should be reported via 01609 534037 in line with the Emergency Planning Guidance available on the [Education Settings Emergency Plan | CYPInfo \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk) page.

You are reminded that **whilst your priority is to inform parents first, it is also critical that you make us aware of your school closure as early as possible** in order that we can publicise this information on the Council website and social media feeds (used by parents, members of the public and the media to check on the status of individual schools) and respond to individual parental enquiries or complaints. In addition the LA is often required to provide daily school closure lists to the DfE for the Secretary of State's information.

Finally, if your school is unfortunate enough to be involved in any incident, remember that the Local Authority is here to help with advice and support or to provide assistance with media enquiries. You may wish to review your Emergency Plan to ensure processes regarding school closures are up to date. The Emergency Plan template is available on [Education Settings Emergency Plan | CYPInfo \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk) which includes actions cards on dealing with school closures and managing and dealing with the aftermath of an incident.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Cowley

Lisa Cowley
Leadership Support Manager – Children and Young People's Service

UNAVOIDABLE CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS – CHECKLIST

There will be occasions, for instance due to adverse weather or loss of utilities etc, when you need to take the decision to close your school at short notice. This checklist provides key contact information for you to use.

Who do I inform?

Action 1 – Inform Parents and staff

1.1 Inform parents/staff by your normal channels. This may be by letter (if you have more than 24 hours notice of a closure), text message, school website, telephone or by the local radio. The following radio stations may be able to help. Remember you will need to have the password.

Radio Station	Contact Telephone Number
BBC Radio York www.bbc.co.uk/york (updated throughout the day but Radio York prefers schools to call and talk to someone)	Call 01904 622033; a member of the BBC team will ask: 1) Name of caller 2) Full name of school 3) Contact number 4) Password 5) Closure status & details - full closure, partial etc. and any additional details (eg. Open for year 10 only)
BBC Tees	Email tees.news@bbc.co.uk or call 01642 340668
BBC Leeds	Please email radioleeds@bbc.co.uk or call 0113 224 7300
Greatest Hits Radio	Email: https://planetradio.co.uk/greatest-hits/contact-us/
TFM Radio	Email 0191 230 6100; studio – 01642 616666
Heart FM	0113 238 1114
Heart North Lancashire and Cumbria	studio 01524 848969
Your Harrogate Radio	Email: inquiries@yourharrogate.co.uk or call 01423 740993.
The Bay FM (Lancaster)	Email snow@thebay.co.uk or call 01524 848747, giving DfE number and password
Viking FM	newsdesk@vikingfm.co.uk or call 01482 320903 or studio 01482 226222

1.2 If staff need to be informed “out of hours”, it is useful to have organised a staff “telephone tree” in advance. At times of emergency, you do not want to be organising this on an “ad hoc” basis whilst you have other things to think about.

Action 2 – Home to School Transport Contractors

2. Inform the bus/taxi contractors responsible for those children at your school who travel on Home to School Transport services. Where feeder services are in operation you should also notify those contractors and then inform the Integrated Passenger Transport Team at County Hall, telephone **01609 533133** or email ipt.compliance@northyorks.gov.uk.

Action 3 – Inform the Local Authority

3.1 Whilst your priority is to inform parents first, it is also critical that you make us aware of your school closure as early as possible in order that we can publicise this information on the Council website, which is used by parents, members of the public and the media to check on the status of individual schools and respond to calls from individual parental enquiries or complaints. We are also often required to provide school closure data to the DfE for information.

3.2 Report a closure by:

- emailing lisa.cowley@northyorks.gov.uk (including the words “School Closure” in the subject line; or

3.3 Seek advice/guidance on a possible closure by

- going to the school closures page on CYPInfo at <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-closures>
- emailing lisa.cowley@northyorks.gov.uk (including the words “School Closure advice request” in the subject line
- ringing **01609 532218** - Note that the phone may at times be diverted. If the line is engaged, please leave a message and we will get back to you. If you cannot make contact by phone you can contact us via email to lisa.cowley@northyorks.gov.uk

If you require advice from the NYC Press Office regarding media enquiries:
media@northyorks.gov.uk

Action 4 - Request Out of Hours Emergency support outside normal office hours (8.30-5.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Friday) and weekends/bank holidays

4.1 For non-buildings related Out of hours Emergencies please ring 01609 798081. This is the first point of contact outside normal office hours for any council support which you need. **This is the Resilience and Emergencies Team contact number which is for significant emergencies or incidents only and MUST NOT BE DISCLOSED to members of the public. It should not be used for minor issues, to report a school closure due to extreme weather or for buildings related emergencies.**

Telephone Numbers for Building Repairs

Within office hours call 01609 53 2020 Option 2

(Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm)

Emergency repairs outside of normal office hours Property service centre: 01609 53 2020

Option 1, out of hours property menu – further options following first stage:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Tom Willoughby	HCS	Tom Willoughby	Ace Elevators	GEM

Major emergency incidents: 01609 772 062

Tom Willoughby

Flood, storm, vandalism, fire, building element failure.

Fixed mechanical equipment: 01609 773 999 HCS

Heating, air conditioning, thermostatic mixer valves, commercial catering, sewage pumps, waste disposal units, fume and dust extraction.

Alarms: (fire and intruder) 01609 772 062 Tom Willoughby

Lifts: (lifts, stair lifts and hoists) 0330 332 6259 Ace Elevators

Automatic Doors: (automatic and roller doors) 01482 506 559 GEM

Hard FM Maintenance Contractors

Excluding Lot 7 the named Contractors cover both the West and East areas

Lot 1	General Building Responsive Maintenance – Tom Willoughby
Lot 2	Mechanical Equipment and Plant – HCS Mechanical Services
Lot 3	Fire and Intruder Alarms – Tom Willoughby
Lot 4	Lifts – Ace Elevators
Lot 5	Automatic Doors – Gem Automatic Door Services
Lot 6	Fixed Electrical Inspection Testing, Testing and Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and Stage Lighting – John Cullerton and Sons Limited
Lot 7	Chimneys, Lighting Conductors and other High Access Structures a. Central High Rise – West area b. Horizon – East area
Lot 8	Water Hygiene – hsl Compliance
Lot 9	Fire Equipment Inspection and Supply – JLA Security and Alarms
Lot 10	PE & Play Equipment – Continental
Lot 11	Asbestos Analysis – hsl Compliance
Lot 12	Asbestos Abatement – em1

Schools who are not members of the Property Solutions Scheme should ensure that they have made appropriate arrangements to enable them to have maintenance works undertaken outside of normal working hours in the event of an emergency. (The three contractors above can be contacted direct by non-Property Solutions schools. However, it should be noted that emergency cover is limited, and if contractors are able to respond then arrangements for ordering/payment will sit with the school).

Property during Christmas closedown/February Half-Term

Please ensure that your property is managed and protected during closure periods to ensure that there is no interruption to the delivery of educational services when buildings re-open. Please monitor weather forecasts and particularly severe weather warnings. Ensure that your property is protected during cold spells and when unoccupied – i.e. heating systems set to 10 degrees Celsius, and if there are prolonged spells of heavy rain/flooding, ensure that your property is checked, particularly if you have basements/boilers located in basements.

General information

If pupils need to be sent home early

- **parents of primary school pupils** should be informed so that they can make arrangements for the collection and supervision of their child. If there is doubt about the arrangements, the child must be kept in school and supervised;
- in the case of **secondary school children**, you need to be satisfied that no child will be put at risk by an early departure.

Home to School Transport - checklist for Schools

- Read guidance at [Policy for provision of school transport in severe weather | North Yorkshire Council](#)
- Keep a note of telephone numbers for all contractors including those operating connecting/feeder services in relation to your school.
- Contact the bus/taxi contractors, giving as much notice as possible. NB. Due to other commitments during the day it is not always possible for them to respond immediately to requests for early departures. You should ensure that there is someone to receive the child at home prior to the contractor departing the school grounds
- Where a transport service connects with another service, ensure that the connecting service is operating.

Information sources

School transport timetable information

[Bus timetable information | North Yorkshire Council \(northyorkstravel.info\)](#)

Code of Conduct and Bad Weather leaflets

[Home to school transport code of conduct and general guidelines | North Yorkshire Council](#)

[Policy for provision of school transport in severe weather | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Contractor details

[Bus operator details | North Yorkshire Council](#)

North Yorkshire Council school closure list:

[School closures | North Yorkshire Council](#)

North Yorkshire Council gritting and road conditions information:

[Winter service | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Twitter Gritter

See our latest gritting plans via twitter: @northyorkscs #nygrit

CYPsinfo School closure guidance and advice

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-closures>

The following websites may also be of assistance –

BBC Weather

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/>

Road Closures

[Roadwatch traffic news | AA](#)