



Chirnside Primary School

Chirnside

Berwickshire

TD11 3XH

Tel: 01890-818274 Fax: 01890 817002

Head Teacher: Mr N.A. Trussler

www.chirnside.scotborders.sch.uk/

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www.facebook.com/chirnsideprimaryschool

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Chirnside Primary School: Resilient Schools Update

As we move further into winter, we are making plans for how school will operate in the event of severe adverse weather. These plans are part of Scottish Borders Council's 'Resilient Schools' programme. Below are some frequently asked questions regarding 'Resilient Schools' and an explanation of what this will mean for pupils at Chirnside Primary School.

What is resilient schools?

After the severe winter in 2010 SBC prepared a system which aims to keep as many schools as possible open in bad winter weather, this is called 'Resilient Schools'. Some people also refer to it as 'snow schools'.

When will resilient schools be invoked?

In severe weather the Council's Resilience Team liaise with Police Scotland, the MET Office and Head Teachers. The weather is monitored continually and if the situation merits, the Director of Education will invoke resilient schools.

What happens on a resilient school day?

In severe weather the Council's Resilience Team may decide to invoke resilient schools. When this happens: Parents and school staff will be informed - this is normally done by 'Group Call' for parents and 'Business Continuity' for staff. Information will also be available on the SBC website, social media (SBC and Chirnside PS Facebook pages) and on local radio (Radio Borders).

Teachers living in the Borders will teach at their nearest schools - SBC have a mapping of the home addresses of teachers against local schools. This means during severe weather SBC can put in place an emergency staffing arrangement. This means teaching staff report to their local school if they are within walking distance. This allows the maximum number of classes across the council to open.

School transport will not run - a large number of SBC staff live out with the Borders - so under the system there will still be fewer teachers in relation to pupils. Therefore the system can only operate in circumstances where transport is not running.

Only children who can safely walk to school should attend school - pupils' safety is our main priority. It is ultimately your decision whether or not you think it is safe for your children to walk to school. **Pupils who normally travel via bus, taxi or are brought by car from out with Chirnside would not attend school under the resilient schools system.**

Mrs J Waite, Head Teacher at Swinton and Greenlaw primaries, will manage Chirnside Primary School under 'Resilient Schools'. Mrs Waite will allocate teaching and support staff to classes and make decisions regarding the running of the school. All queries should be made to Mrs Waite during resilient school opening at Chirnside Primary School.

Mr Trussler will be working remotely from home and be available to advise Mrs Waite and Resilient Schools staff as required. Mr Trussler will also be able to keep parents informed regarding the resilient schools situation through 'Group Call' and the school's Facebook page. Please ensure that we have your up

to date mobile phone details to ensure you receive 'Group Call' messages. If in doubt, please ask Mrs Gregory to check the number we have on record for you.

Why are some schools open, partially open and some schools closed?

Each 'resilient school' has an allocated group of staff who live locally. Some of the reasons why some schools might still not open are:

Staff absence - if staff are off-sick this has an impact on the pupil-teacher ratio. Health and safety dictates the number of staff required for the number of pupils - including staff trained in first-aid.

Not enough staff live locally - The number of staff living locally is not sufficient to meet health and safety requirements. In this case, the school will make a decision which year groups will be asked to attend.

Buildings/access issues - such as heating problems, catering issues, inability to create one safe access into the school building.

Under Resilient Schools, Chirnside Primary School will be open for Nursery and Primary 3 to Primary 7 pupils only.

Primary 1 and Primary 2 pupils would not attend school.

Why are parents being put in the position of having one or two of their children off school and others attending?

Decisions have to be made where there is insufficient staff to meet the needs of the pupils. It is understood that this is challenging for parents and we aim to communicate as early as possible to enable them to make arrangements. **It is important that parents realise they ultimately have the responsibility to decide whether or not they wish to send their children to school under these circumstances.**

Are pupils given work to do when their school is closed or partially open?

A variety of appropriate learning activities have been designed and are available to download from our school website (www.chirnside.scotborders.sch.uk/ > For Parents > Resilient Schools)

Activities are organised under the following headings:

- Nursery and Primary 1
- Primary 2 / Primary 3 / Primary 4
- Primary 5 / Primary 6 / Primary 7

Activities are based on a theme or context, with full parent guidelines and instructions available. These activities are designed to be investigative in nature and interactive between children and parents. Activities cover a variety of curriculum areas. **It is recommended that parents take the opportunity to explore and download activities from the school website prior to a resilient schools situation being invoked.**

The roads are ok where I live, why are schools closed?

There are various factors that need to be taken into consideration when deciding on whether a school remains open. Even though roads might look ok in some areas of the Borders, staff may be travelling from elsewhere and as above - there may not be sufficient local staff to allow the school to open or partially open.

How does this affect school meals?

The situation varies across schools. Where there are difficulties providing a hot meal - parents will be advised to send their child with a packed-lunch. Often sandwich lunches can be provided for all pupils. It is envisaged that our kitchen will be able to provide a normal lunch service under 'Resilient Schools' as kitchen staff live locally.

Any further questions?

If you have any further questions regarding 'Resilient Schools', information is available on Scottish Borders Council's website:

(http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/721/winter_weather/1223/winter_and_gritting_faqs/6)

Any questions regarding the resilient school arrangements for Chirnside Primary School should be directed to myself.

Kind regards,

Nick Trussler
Head Teacher