
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS 20th November 2025

Emergency Closure

Introduction

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that adverse weather conditions can prevent employees from reaching their normal place of employment. No teacher will be required to attend their place of work if it is unsafe to do so.

This agreement is designed to assist in maintaining a level of service delivery during periods of severe weather and to provide teachers with a range of options where adverse weather conditions prevent them from fulfilling their contractual obligation to attend work or comply fully with normal working arrangements.

1. Definitions

1.1 Unplanned Emergency Closure - a temporary suspension of normal school operations due to unforeseen circumstances that make it unsafe or impractical to continue teaching and learning. These closures are usually triggered by events like severe weather, public health incidents, or major disruptions like unplanned power outages or serious building issues.

1.2 Planned Emergency Closure - emergency closure, where staff are given 48 hours' notice of closure. Examples may include water main supply being shut off for maintenance with prior notification

2. Learning During Emergency Closures

2.1 In order to maintain a level of service for children and young people during school closures, teachers should endeavour to provide suitable work that reduces the impact of such events. Appropriate learning activities/materials/website links will be posted via appropriate electronic platforms by staff for all secondary subjects/stages and for key primary curricular areas/stages. Parents, carers, children and young people will be advised on how to access these.

2.2 No teacher will be expected or directed to provide live online teaching during any Emergency Closure.

2.3 In the event of extended periods of emergency closure, such as after a fire, the Authority will seek to identify alternative accommodation to allow in-person teaching to recommence. Until then, this agreement stands.

3. Planned Emergency Closure

3.1 In the event of a planned closure, teachers should be given sufficient time to produce/identify meaningful work that meets the needs of learners, including those with Support needs. Time should be allocated from planning and preparation time between announcement of the closure and the closure occurring. However, in some circumstances this may not be possible. If this is the case, school leadership should make sufficient time available during the school day to allow planning to occur.

3.2 Work can be presented to learners as hard copy or by use of Google Classroom. Staff need to be aware of the likelihood of some children and young people in our Authority not having access to ICT or the internet and may still be in an area with limited connectivity. Consideration should also be given to such circumstances and teachers should develop tasks accordingly.

3.3 Teachers will be expected to engage with their class(es) online, but not through live lessons. Arrangements should be made to have access to an Authority VPN device at home.

3.4 Through negotiation with their Line Manager, a teacher may decide to work from another local school or establishment during a Planned Emergency Closure.

3.5 Teachers should also undertake previously agreed professional duties in line with current service/school/department improvement priorities during a Planned Emergency Closure.

4. Unplanned Emergency Closure

4.1 Unplanned closures, by their nature, will need more flexibility in the expectations from both teaching staff and senior leaders.

4.2 Learning resources for children and young people should be provided using Google Classroom. In most cases, planning and preparation will not be possible in such circumstances this may not be possible. If this is the case, then teachers must be given adequate preparation time during the first day of closure to identify suitable resources.

4.3 Teachers will be expected, after being given adequate time to prepare, to engage with their class(es) online, but not through live lessons.

4.4 Through negotiation with their Line Manager, a teacher may decide to work from another local school or establishment during a Unplanned Emergency Closure.

4.5 For closures over 2 days, teachers will continue to develop/signpost teaching materials and undertake previously agreed professional duties in line with current service/school/department improvement priorities.

5. Weather

5.1 The Met Office issues weather warnings through the National Severe Weather Warning Service. Severe weather is the most common reason for unplanned emergency closures. As soon as a Severe Weather Warning is received, the Local Resilience Partnership will meet in preparation to ensure situational awareness across Argyll and Bute.

5.2 Council-wide decisions on school closures will be made at the Council Tactical Group, reflecting the advice given and decisions made at the Local Resilience Partnership. Heads of Service attending the Council Tactical Group will decide which schools are to close across the area. The aim is to give pupils and staff enough time to get home safely before severe weather arrives. Once a decision is made, Heads of Service will inform Head Teachers who will then make appropriate arrangements to notify staff and parents/carers.

5.3 If a member of staff has not been informed of a school closure but their travel route is affected by a Red Weather Warning, they should:

- follow the warning, take cognisance of the advice of the emergency services and not travel
- work from home (where this is not possible, liaise with their HT/Line Manager)

6. Traffic and transport

6.1 In exceptional circumstances, the transport network in Argyll & Bute could lead to an Emergency Closure. Teachers should not be asked to take excessively long diversion routes to attend their place of work (over 1 hour). In these circumstances, staff should liaise with their HT/Line Manager and identify a viable alternative to fulfil their contractual obligations.



Signed on behalf of Education Management
Name: Wendy Brownlie
Designation: Joint Chair of JSC
Date: 5/12/2025



Signed on behalf Teachers' Side
Name: Dan Semple
Designation: Joint Chair JSC
Date: 5/12/2025