



28 January 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

School Closures

As we enter another period of potentially bad weather I would like to remind parents and carers of our procedure in case it becomes necessary to close the College.

Please be assured that a decision to close the school is only taken after very careful consideration of all the information and advice available and even then, only as a last resort. This is never a decision we take lightly however we will always consider the safety of our students around the college site or on their way to and from school and the inability of our staff to safely make the journey to school based on road or travel conditions. Parents may also need to take account of local conditions near to where they live before making a decision to send their children to school.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents of our contingency arrangements:

1. Advance notice of a School Closure

In order to avoid students and parents having to make unnecessary journeys to school, as far as possible we will always try to give parents as much advance notice as we can of a college closure. We will always aim to let parents know at or around 7.00 a.m. on the day, but if we have enough cause to be concerned, we will try to give out the information the evening before.

Parents will be able to obtain information about a closure by:

- Consulting our school website www.astor-college.co.uk. Any news about a school closure will be placed on the home page. This is the quickest way to be informed.
- Consulting the Kent County Council School Closure website www.kentclosures.co.uk. This page contains a list of all schools in Kent which are closed or planning to close.
- Receiving a text message via Parentmail.
- By listening to our local radio stations and in particular, Radio Kent.

2. Forced closure of the school during the school day

If it becomes necessary to close the college during the day then we will operate the following contingency measures:

- Once the decision has been made to close the school, the information will again be placed on the School website. Students will be informed of the decision. **Priority will be given to those students who live outside of Dover or beyond walking distance of the school.**

DFA MAT Company Offices

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Please note that under no circumstances should students contact parents to seek permission to go home or leave the school site without the direct permission of a member of staff. Clearly it is not practically possible for the school to contact every parent individually to obtain permission for students to leave the school. This is an exceptional circumstance when we need to be able to trust that students have obtained permission themselves, **so please have this conversation with your child beforehand as to what to do in the event of severe weather affecting their ability to get to their normal address. It would be good practice for them to write down their snow address, telephone contact number and name in their planners to pass onto staff.**

In cases where students are unable to obtain permission or where it is not possible for students to leave the school early, arrangements will be made for these students to remain in school under supervision until alternative provision can be made. Whilst we will do our best to contact the various bus and taxi operators that service the school, it may not be possible for them to adjust their times because of other commitments. If it looks likely because of road conditions that they will be unable to collect students at the end of school, we will do our best to inform parents.

If your son or daughter has a planned external examination, College will always open to allow that exam to occur and we would expect them to attend if they are safe and able to do so. Non-attendance could result in a charge being incurred. Once again if they are unable to attend the exam for safety reasons, or illness please contact the school number and leave a message.

I hope all the above information will help you in the event we should need to close the school.

For future reference, a copy of this letter is also on our website. Finally, may I ask you only to telephone the college as a last resort as our switchboard is quickly overwhelmed which then causes problems when we need to make and receive urgent calls.

Thank you as always for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Mr L Kane
Principal