Non Statutory Policy

Inclement Weather

Drafted by:
Wendy Keeble
Business & Operations Manager

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Date of Approval by Governing Body:
November 2019

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Signed By Chair of Governors:

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Review date:
November 2020

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Person(s) Responsible for Day to Day Management:
Director of Business & Finance

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Person Responsible for Review:
Director of Business & Finance

Snow and Ice on School Premises

1. Each year, many staff and members of the public suffer personal injuries as a consequence of slipping and falling on ice and snow.

2. The approved code of practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that "arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes…...".

3. The Headteacher and Business & Operations Manager along with the Site Supervisor who have direct responsibility for premises/sites must ensure that adequate arrangements are made to ensure that the risks from snow and ice are minimised.

4. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that the establishment remains open as normal.

5. The Director of Business must ensure that a risk assessment is in place, which covers the hazards associated with snow and ice on their premises.

6. The Director of Business has been nominated to monitor local weather forecasts if necessary, in order for them to react to the situation as quickly as possible and implement any special measures eg it may be necessary for staff to start work earlier on a particular day to commence a gritting plan.

7. Site staff should be given instructions to ensure that gritting, snow clearing and, in extreme cases, closure of certain routes is arranged as necessary.

8. The availability of staff will obviously be a significant limiting factor in determining the extent of precautions which it is reasonable to expect, but the following recommendations are provided as a guide to typical arrangements which must be in place. The Bursar is responsible for reviewing and revising the arrangements.

- Clear a path 1 metre wide from the site entrance to the main building entrance. Slopes and steps should be regarded as a priority.
- Treat cleared paths with salt/grit to maintain a clear pathway especially where temperatures remain below freezing.
- If slopes and steps remain in a dangerous condition, it may be necessary to prevent access to the affected area.
- The site car entrance and the 'roundabout'/barrier area should also be treated to ensure safety of cars and passengers entering the site
- Posters should be located throughout the building indicating:
  - "Caution Ice"; and
  - "Keep to the path"
- As time permits, other pathways to entrances and between buildings should be cleared and gritted.
- Car parks should not be treated as priority but pathways leading from car parks to the building should be dealt with as soon as possible.

9. Where the Headteacher or Director of Business & Finance has concerns over the safety of certain external pathways, circulation routes, playgrounds etc, it may be appropriate for affected areas to be taken out of use. If there is a requirement to prevent access to paths, slopes, steps or other areas then this must be marked clearly using signs/cones/tape to ensure everyone is made aware.

10. Where playgrounds remain excessively slippery due to compacted snow and ice, it may be necessary for pupils to be accommodated indoors at break times. If playgrounds remain in use, supervision levels may need to be increased.

11. All staff should be aware of the risk assessment in place for snow and ice and take responsibility for following the designated paths and access routes when such conditions exist.

12. The School may advise parents – sometime in the autumn term - of the plans and procedures they have put in place for dealing with snow and ice around school premises.

13. When a decision is taken to close a school due to bad weather, the Headteacher should inform parents using the following School Closure Procedure.

Inclement Weather and Related Emergencies

1.   The Authority has a statutory duty to provide full-time education for school pupils for 190 days each year. Reducing the pupil year below this figure is permissible only where a closure is unavoidable and it is not reasonably practicable to make up for attendances lost. It is therefore necessary that schools should be kept open wherever possible during spells of severe weather and other emergencies (e.g. breakdown of heating systems, non delivery of fuel etc).

2.   Points to be borne in mind in deciding whether or not to close a school are:

   i)   The Authority does not make 'blanket' decisions to close schools. All decisions must be taken on the individual circumstances of the school.

   ii)   It is preferable to close a school for half a day, rather than a whole day, unless this is really not practicable.

   iii)   Where staff are unable to reach school, consideration should be given to combining classes rather than closing the school. Every attempt should be made to accommodate children who arrive at school and who are unable to return home before the end of the school day.

   iv)   The school should have in place arrangements for deciding on whether or not to close if the Headteacher is not able to reach the school. The Authority does not expect decisions to be taken without an assessment of circumstances at the school. It is also helpful to consult neighbouring establishments so that where possible a co-ordinated response to the situation can be made.

   v)   The Authority should be informed and the Chair of Governors should be consulted about all closures, unless this is not possible.

   vi)   Decisions to close should normally be for no more than two days and reassessed regularly thereafter.

3.   Where the school is closed, it may be appropriate to use local radio as part of the strategy for informing parents. With effect from November 2012, local radio stations have been advised to regularly check the Staffordshire County Council Emergency School Closure website: (http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/emergencyclosures). The radio stations have been advised to use the information from our website to broadcast school closures to their listeners. Headteachers can enter their school closure directly onto our website by following the instructions given on the Staffordshire Learning Net (SLN).

4.   In the event of the school having to close, all employees should be paid normally, regardless of whether they were able to report for duty, unless the Governors believe that individuals did not make reasonable attempts to travel to work and the closure was caused mainly by their non-attendance. The Headteacher should decide whether it is reasonable or necessary to require them to remain on the premises undertaking other duties within their job description. This will depend on:

   i)   paying due regard to matters relating to health, safety and welfare of employees and pupils;

   ii)   whether or not these duties could be carried out at home;

   iii) whether staying on the premises would create unreasonable difficulties for the journey home, particularly where conditions are deteriorating.

5.   In the case of a school remaining open, where the employee does not report for duty, the Governors have discretion to allow normal pay. In determining whether or not pay is to be allowed, the basic issue should be whether or not the employee has made every reasonable effort to attend school.

6.   Advice from weather forecasters and the Police for people to 'stay at home' does not constitute an entitlement to pay for staff that follow this advice.

7.   Where the Governors decide to withhold pay because of the employee's absence, they should notify the Authority so that the appropriate deduction can be made. This could involve a deduction for less than the full period of absence, if they believe that some of it was justified.

8.   Governors are advised not to consider disciplinary action against staff who are absent because of inclement weather.

Online Recording of School Closures User Instructions

Log in to the School Closures System

1. On the School Learning Network go to :
   http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/ProceduresAndGuidance/Procedures/emergencyclosures/

2. Click on the Head Teacher Log in link.

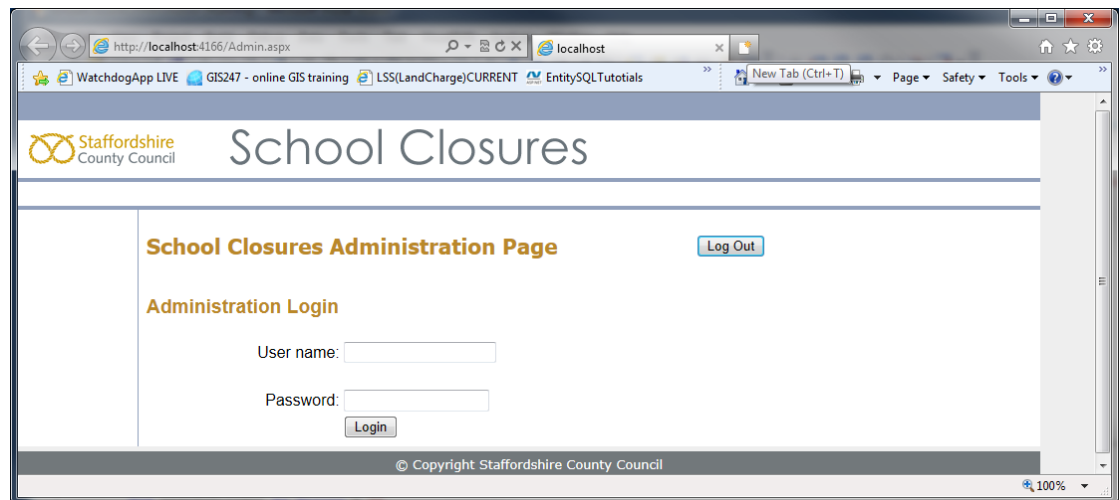   NOTE: Schools and academies now use the same login page.

Fig 1. shows the Log In screen.

3. Enter the **User Name** and **Password** for your school closures account. Click the '**Log In**' button.

4. If you have logged on successfully the **School Closures Administration** page appears on the screen. Note that your school name, school type and school district will appear on screen along with any current or future closure records for your school (see Fig 2. Below – showing TEST DATA ONLY).

Fig 2. shows a data grid with one school closure record for St Peter's First School (this is TEST DATA only).

5. The **data grid** (see Fig 2. above) displays only **current or future** closure records for the school. Closure records with an end date prior to today's date will not appear in the data grid unless the '**Show expired closures only**' check box is ticked, after which only expired closures are shown (un-check the box to return to the original setting).

Enter a school closure record

6. To enter a school closure record complete all of the details indicated in Fig 3 below.

Fig.3 shows where to enter the information for a new school closure record.

7. Enter the closure **Start Date** and **Finish Date** – each date must be in 'dd/mm/yyyy' format otherwise an error message will show when you try to save the closure record.

8. Select a **Closure Reason** from the drop down list.

9. You must enter a description or enter extra information about the closure in the **Description/Information** box (maximum 1000 characters, please keep this as brief as possible).

10. After completing the record information and clicking on the '**Save New**' button the data grid will refresh to show the new school closure record.

   NOTES:
   If your school is to be **closed for one day** then the start date and the end date will be the same. For example, a one day closure on the 15th November 2016 will have a start date and end date of the 15th November 2016.

If your school is closed for a 'Weather related' reason, the closure period may only be for 24 hours. If your school remains closed for two or more consecutive days because of weather related reasons you must enter a new closure record for each day.

You may not enter closures with past dates.

Edit a school closure record

11. If you wish to **Edit** the information in a school closure record **click the 'Edit' icon next to the record you want to change**. The record information will appear in the Start Date, Finish Date, Closure Reason and Description/Information boxes.

Make the changes in the relevant text boxes. To abandon the edit procedure, click the '**Cancel Edit**' button, otherwise click on the '**Save Edit**' button and the data grid will be refreshed to show the changes you have made.

Fig 4 .shows the screen in 'Edit' mode. In this example the Description/Information text is in the process of being changed.

Delete a school closure record

12. To delete a school closure record, click on the '**Delete**' icon next to the record in the data grid. The record information will appear in the Start Date, Finish Date, Closure Reason and Description/Information boxes. To abandon the delete procedure click on the 'Cancel Delete' button. If you wish to continue to delete the record click on the '**Delete**' button.

Fig 5. Shows how to delete a record (expired or current records can be deleted).

Expired closures

13. To view the expired closures for your establishment click the checkbox '**Show expired closures only**'. You may delete any of the past records or you may 'recycle' these old records by editing them with current or future closure information.

Help - problems with user name and passwords

Schools: please contact **Learning Technologies Service Desk: 01889 256290**

Academies: please contact **Carol Stimpson**
email: **carol.stimpson@staffordshire.gov.uk**
tel: **01785 278153**

Emergency School Closures

## How will I know if my child's school is closed?

Headteachers can now update this web site in real time, allowing parents to get up to date information on their child's school in the quickest way possible.

Any school closures reported to the local authority by the Headteacher will display on the **school closures list**.

In addition, a smart phone version of the **school closure list** is also available for any parents on the move or without PC access. All you need to do is access the list using your mobile phone's internet browser and the mobile version will display.

Other methods of communication may include:

- Announcement on the local radio stations (radio stations will refer to this web site for up to date information)
- Message on school web site and school answerphone
- Notice on school gates
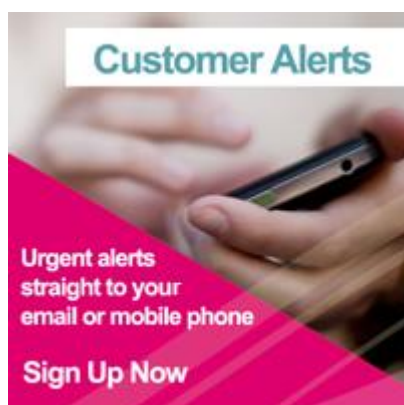
Sign up for alerts

You can now sign up for school closure alerts via text message and email, so that we can notify you immediately when your school informs us of a closure. Our alerts system includes school closures and a wide range of other county council services. **Sign up for alerts**

How is the decision to close a school made?

Staffordshire County Council does not make a blanket decision to close all schools due to inclement weather.

The decision to close a school is made by the Headteacher. They have to determine whether children and staff can travel safely to and from school and if the site will remain safe throughout the day.

To do this a risk assessment is conducted taking into account a range of factors including:

- State of pathways, steps and slopes around the school
- Condition of roads and pathways in the local area
- If the school's heating, lighting and water is working correctly
- Whether catering can be provided
- Availability of public transport and school coaches
- Weather forecast

Schools may also need to close due to other unforeseen circumstances such as heating failure, burst water pipe, etc.

It is recommended that a decision to close the school is made as early as possible, in order to inform parents/carers.

There are no results that match your criteria.

Help us to improve our web site. Rate this page...

<p>Browser does not support script.</p>

- [More Sharing ServicesShare](#)

  </body>

  <p>Browser does not support script.</p>

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EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCEDURES 2019/20

If there is any doubt about the school being able to open on any morning (e.g.: extremely bad weather, boiler failure, electricity failure etc).

Mrs W Keeble will consult with Mrs R Johnson and a decision will be made by 7.00 am. If the decision is taken to close the school the telephone cascade will commence immediately. In addition the Staffordshire County Council Emergency School Closure website will be updated with information regarding the school closure. Local radio stations will regularly check this website for school closure updates and will make the necessary announcements. Radio stations will also be informed directly. Each member of staff making a phone call should ensure that they have the telephone number(s) of those staff they need to phone.

Please keep your telephone calls brief and to the point so that the message gets to the end of the 'chain' as quickly as possible.

Even if the school is closed, staff are expected to report for work unless their journey would be too hazardous, or the conditions in school are unacceptable to work here during the day.

Mrs Wendy Keeble, Director of Business & Finance

4.

Checklist of actions (including if closure occurs part way through the day)

Task	Responsibility
Inform Chair of Governors	Headteacher
Take decision to close school	Headteacher (on advice)
Organising Coaches for those students who usually travel to school in this way	Director of Business & Finance
Send text messages to parents	Data Manager
Attempt contact with parents where no mobile number is known	Admin Staff
Someone designated to remain on site and man telephones and reception until 3pm (unless weather conditions are so bad that this would be a health and safety concern for the member of staff themselves	Business & Operations Manager

Organise year group lists and obtain signatures from students in confirmation that they
 	
    o Can get home safely
    o Can enter their home when they get there
    o Will have a parent/ carer there when they arrive
	Admin Staff

If students can answer yes to the above three questions, they can be allowed to leave once they have signed to that fact	All
If students cannot answer yes to all three questions, they should remain in school until a parent can collect them or the school day ends	All
Inform Local Authority (via website)	Business & Operations Manager
Notice on school gate	Site Staff
Notice on website	Senior IT Technician
Message on answerphone	Data Manager
Ring radio stations	Business & Operations Manager
Gritting paths and routes, and sectioning off out of bounds areas	Site Staff
Decision taken to reopen	Headteacher (on advice)

EMERGENCY CLOSURE CONTACT DETAILS

Radio Station	Telephone Number/Email	Information Required
BBC Radio Stoke	01782 208008 radio.stoke@bbc.co.uk	DCSF Number and Password needed
RAM Radio	01332 291028 / 07967 052738 news@ramfm.co.uk	DCSF Number and Password needed
Beacon Radio	01902 461260 newswolverhampton@musicradio.com	DCSF Number
Radio WM	0121 567 6014 bbcwm@bbc.co.uk	DCSF Number
Moorlands Radio	01538 383830 Text on 07745 938220 studio@moorlandsradio.co.uk	DCSF Number
Radio Shropshire	01743 248321 radio.shropshire@bbc.co.uk	DCSF Number
Heart FM	0121 607 7288 snowline@heartfm.co.uk	DCSF Number
Radio Derby	01332 616161 radio.derby@bbc.co.uk	DCSF Number
BRMB & Capital Gold	0121 566 5430 snowline@brmb.co.uk news@brmb.co.uk **Please send email to both email addresses**	DCSF Number Password needed
Signal Radio	01782 441300 no email address available	DCSF Number
Centre/Touch FM	01827 318000 / 0845 4501016 tamworth.newsroom@cnradio.co.uk maria.nelson@cnradio.co.uk **Please send email to both email addresses**	DCSF Number

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS
Email: schoolclosure@staffordshire.gov.uk

If unable to email, please telephone:
Divisional Support Team/DEOs   Team Leader

                                         Lisa Porter   Tel: 01785 278801
                                         Tamworth/East Staffs, Lichfield/Cannock
                                         Sharon Cox   Tel: 01785 276105
                                         Stafford/South Staffs, Newcastle/Moorlands
                                         Jennifer Dix   Tel: 01785 278725

School Transport

For further information regarding operational school transport issues, the following contacts may be helpful:

North Staffs
Pauline Mutimer Tel: 01785 278679
Lynn Addison (SEN) Tel: 01785 276243
Marie Storr (SEN) Tel: 01785 278950

East Staffs
Catherine Brown Tel: 01785 276738
Jessica Rayson Tel: 01785 278213

South/West/Mid Staffs
Anne Holt/Anne Seabridge Tel: 01785 278718/19
Lynsey Greatbatch Tel: 01785 278678

County Catering   The catering supervisor should be contacted directly.

Online Recording of School Closures User Instructions

Log in to the School Closures System

14. Click on the appropriate link to enable you to log on to the School Closures System (choose between a Staffordshire County Council **School** login or a Staffordshire **Academy** login according to which type of establishment you belong). The log in screen will appear.
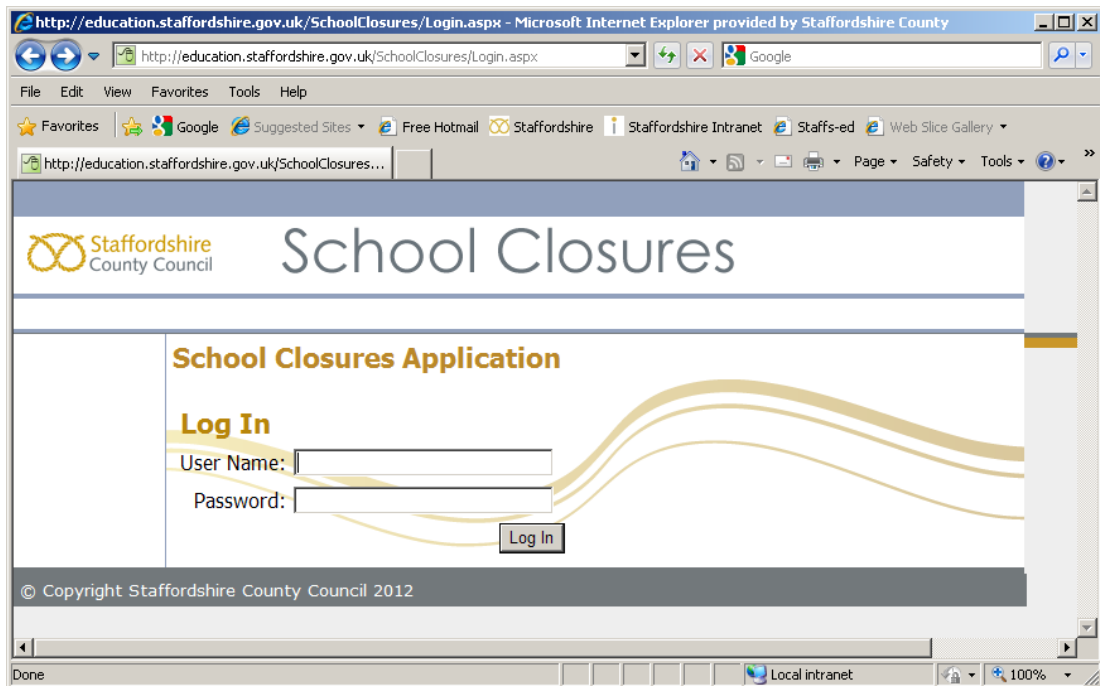
Fig 1. shows the Log In screen.

15. Enter the logon **User Name** and **Password** for the Head Teacher account of your establishment (this is the same as the Head Teacher account for the **Budget Pack System**). Click the '**Log In**' button.

16. If you have logged on successfully the **School Closures Administration** page appears on the screen. Note that your school name, school type and school district will appear on screen along with any current closure records for your school (see Fig 2. below).
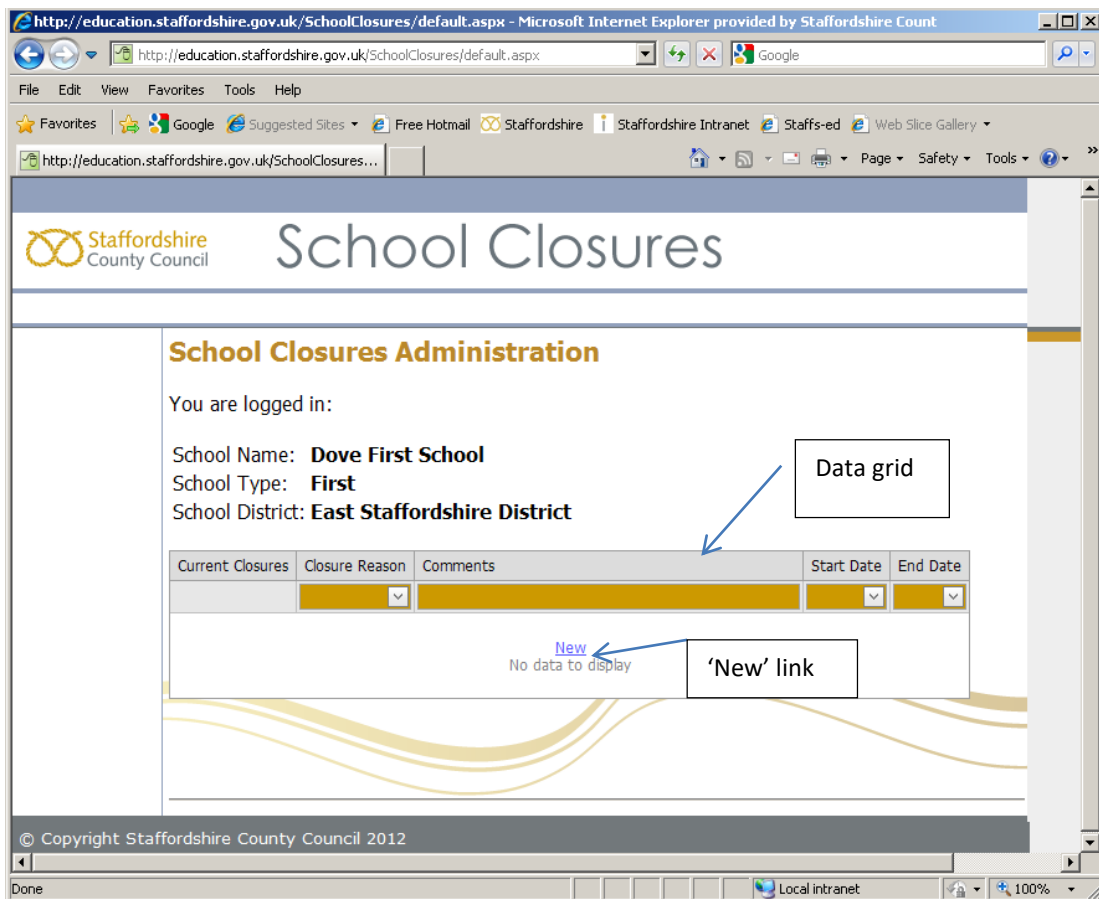
*Fig 2. shows a data grid with no **current** school closure records for Dove First School.*

17. The **data grid** (see Fig 2. above) will display only **current** closure records for your school (closure records with an end date prior to today's date will not appear in the data grid). In Fig 2. the example shows a data grid with no current school closure records for our example school, Dove First School.

Enter a school closure record

18. To enter a school closure record click on the '**New'** link (indicated in Fig.2 above), the **new record data grid** will open and you must enter the details in the text boxes provided (see Fig 3. below).

Fig.3 shows where to enter the information for a new school closure record.

19. Select a **Closure Reason** from the drop down list.

20. You may enter extra information about the closure in the **Comments** box (maximum 1000 characters, but please keep your comments as brief as possible).

21. Select a **Start Date** and an **End Date** for the closure. To save the record click on the **'Update' link**.

    NOTE:
    If your school is to be **closed for one day** then the start date and the end date will be the same. For example, a one day closure on the 15th November will have a start date and end date of the 15th November.

    If your school is closed for a 'Weather related' reason the closure period may only be for 24 hours (see the example in Fig 4. below). If your school remains closed for two or more consecutive days because of a weather related reason then you must enter a closure record for each day.

Fig 4. shows the sort of information you might enter for a school closure record (this example shows a weather related closure i.e. 24 hour duration only.)

22. After completing the record information and clicking on the the '**Update**' link, the data grid will refresh and show the completed school closure record in the data grid (see Fig 5. below).
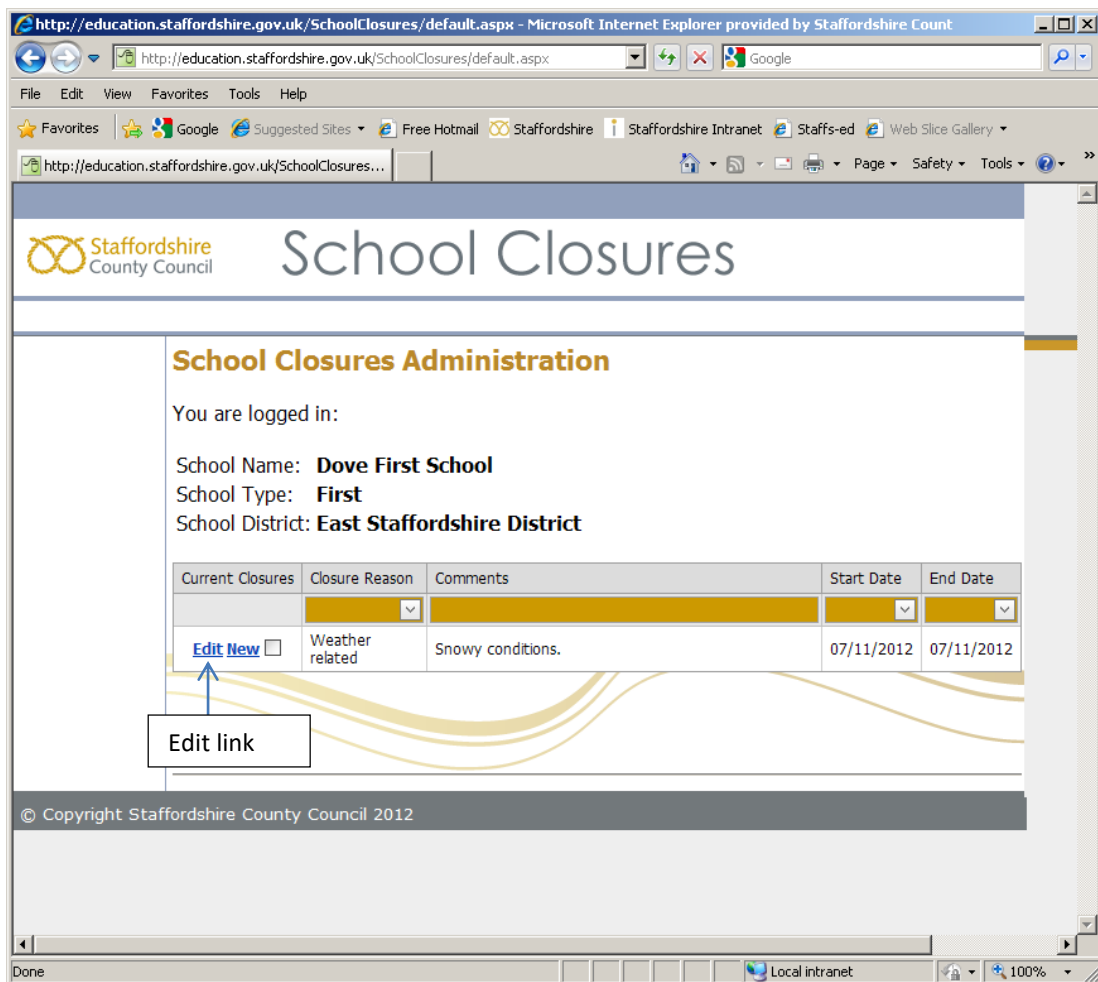
*Fig 5.shows the saved school closure record in the refreshed data grid. (Note that an **Edit** link appears to the side of the new record.)*

Edit a school closure record

23. If you wish to **Edit** the information of a school closure record **click the 'Edit' link NEXT to the record you want to change**. The **data edit grid** will appear so that you can make the required changes in the appropriate places. When you have finished editing the information click on the **'Update' link** (see Fig 6. below) and the data grid will refresh to show the edited record.

*Fig 6.shows the data edit grid. In this example the **Comments** information has been changed.*

Your school closure will automatically be added directly onto the County Council Website – Emergency School Closures webpage:
 www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures

Help

If you require help using the School Closures system you may email or telephone us.

Email address: schoolclosure@staffordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01785 277423 or 01785 854375