

Directive

SECTION – 4(1), EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) REGULATION 2006

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTIVE NO. 01/2015

1. Title **Temporary Closure and Re-opening of State Schools in Disaster or Emergency Situations**
2. Purpose To provide direction to Principals on the management of schools in disaster or emergency situations.
3. Legislative authority This Directive is made pursuant to s.4 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006* (EGPR).
4. Application This Directive applies to Principals in line with their managerial responsibilities under s.5 of the EGPR and to Regional Directors in respect of their support of and managerial responsibility for schools in their Region.
5. Effective date This Directive repeals *Chief Executive's Direction No.1 of 2010*. This Directive takes effect from 1 October 2015.

Authority

6. Under this directive, the Chief Executive gives authority to:
 - a. Principals to temporarily close their school or campus in a disaster or emergency situation and to re-open their school or campus; and
 - b. the Regional Director to, where the Principal has not already acted, to temporarily close a school, campus or schools in a disaster or emergency situation.
7. Other agencies may use their legislative powers to direct the temporary closure of a school, campus or schools. This includes the District Disaster Co-ordinator's (DDC) authority under the *Public Safety Preservation Act 1986* (PSPA).

Decision to temporarily close a school or campus

8. The person responsible for deciding to temporarily close a school or campus in a disaster or emergency situation is the Principal.
9. In making the decision to temporarily close a school or campus, the Principal of the school must:
 - a. consider available disaster or emergency information relevant to their locale;
 - b. consider advice of their Regional Director/Regional Response Controller (RRC) where available;
 - c. consult with other principals where practicable;
 - d. consider the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) where an alert is issued for the area;
 - e. consider advice from the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and/or District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) where available; and
 - f. consider other local stakeholder (e.g. P&C) input where applicable.
10. In making the decision to direct a Principal to temporarily close a school, campus or schools in a geographical area, the Regional Director must:
 - a. consider available disaster or emergency information relevant to the locale;
 - b. consult with principals where practicable;
 - c. consider advice from the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and/or District

- Disaster Management Group (DDMG) where available.
- d. consider the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) where an alert is issued for the area;
 - e. consult with the Department's Executive Response Controller; and
 - f. consult with the non-State sector in the region where practicable.
11. Where students are unable to access safe transport, the Principal must make arrangements to ensure the safety of students at the school or campus, or an alternative site.
12. The Principal may release school staff not necessary for the supervision of students.

Communicating the decision to temporarily close a school or campus

13. The Principal of the school must make reasonable attempts to communicate the decision to temporarily close a school or campus to:
- a. the Regional Director;
 - b. the school community including the Parents and Citizens' Executive;
 - c. all service providers using the site or campus where applicable; and
 - d. the DET Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) if the Regional Director is unavailable.
14. The Regional Director may advise the media of the closure in order to facilitate communication with the community of the temporary closure.
15. The Regional Director must arrange for the closure information to be notified through the school closure website.
16. Where the temporary closure of a school or campus arises during the school day, the Principal must make reasonable attempts to contact parents to make arrangements for the transportation of students to a place of safety.
17. Where the decision to temporarily close the school or campus is made outside of normal school hours, the Principal must make reasonable attempts to notify students, parents, staff, other service providers and the school community of the temporary closure.

Decision to re-open the school or campus

18. The person responsible for deciding to re-open a school or campus following the end of a disaster or emergency situation is the Principal.
19. In making the decision to re-open a school or campus, the Principal must satisfy themselves that it is safe to re-open the school taking into account:
- a. the accessibility to and from the site;
 - b. the condition of the site and infrastructure;
 - c. the availability and impact of essential services;
 - d. available emergency information; and
 - e. the advice of their Regional Director where practicable.

Communicating the decision to re-open a school or campus

20. The Principal must make reasonable attempts to communicate the decision to re-open a school or campus to:
- a. the Regional Director;
 - b. the school community including the Parents and Citizens' Executive;
 - c. all Service providers using the site or campus where applicable; and
 - d. the DET Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) if the Regional Director is unavailable.
21. The Regional Director may advise the media of the re-opening in order to facilitate communication with the community of the re-opening.
22. The Regional Director must arrange for the re-opening information to be notified through the school closure website.

Definitions

For the purpose of this directive the following definitions apply:

DET Executive Response Controller

A person appointed by the Director-General who is responsible for the co-ordination of emergency operations in DET. This is generally the Assistant Director-General, Infrastructure Services Branch.

District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)

The Commissioner, Queensland Police Service (QPS), appoints a chair to the DDC role and deputy Chair for each disaster district. The DDC coordinates the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG).

District Disaster Management Group (DDMG)

The DDMG is responsible for the planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of all measures to mitigate/prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Disaster or emergency situation

Includes, but is not limited to, flood, fire, bushfire, cyclone, tornado, tsunami, earthquake, chemical, medical, biological, or health related matters, structural damage or other circumstances that render gathering or staying at the premises of the instructional institution temporarily unsafe.

Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU)

The ESMU coordinates the delivery of the Department's legislative responsibilities for the purpose of facilitating disaster management preparedness and response.

Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)

The LDMG is responsible for the local planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of all measures to mitigate/prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Principal

The person ordinarily in day-to-day charge of the State school or the person in charge in the absence of the Principal (see s.9 of the EGPR).

Regional Director

The person with responsibility for the management of the Department of Education and Training (DET) region.

Regional Response Controller

Person appointed to coordinate the regional preparation, response and recovery effort. Typically the Regional Director located in the vicinity of the disaster or emergency situation or their delegate.

State school

For the purposes of this Direction, means a State Instructional Institution established under s.13 or 14 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (EGPA)*, namely State primary, secondary or special education schools, environmental education centre and outdoor education centre. A school may have an additional site(s) referred to as a campus.

Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) alerts

Broadcast if the following four factors are present:


- a. Potential for loss of life and/or a major threat to a significant number of properties or the environment. Usually the threat/impact would be the lead item in local news bulletins;
- b. A significant number of people need to be warned;
- c. Impact is expected within 12 hours - or is occurring at the time; and
- d. One or more phenomena are classified as "destructive".

Right to information

I am of the view that the contents or attachments contained in this document **are suitable** for publication.

Endorsement

I, Dr Jim Watterston, Director-General for the Department of Education and Training endorse this directive, effective from 6 October 2015.



Signature



Date



Dr Jim Watterston
Director-General
Department of Education and Training

Level 22 | 30 Mary Street | Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15033 | City East QLD 4002