

extreme events Devon's response to severe weather

factsheet 2

school transport advice

Transport Co-ordination Services (TCS) are based in the Environment Economy & Culture directorate of Devon County Council (DCC) and are responsible for managing home to school transport across the county (excluding Torbay and Plymouth). TCS provide home to school transport on behalf of Children and Young People Services (CYPS). This involves approx. 22,000 pupils being transported every school day and managing over 900 routes across the county.

why does transport not run?

TCS manage all of their route contracts across the county but, in extreme weather conditions, the final decision as to whether the journey can be operated safely or not must rest with the driver/transport company; who are best placed to assess the local conditions. Additionally, when schools take the decision to close no transport is required. Following a prolonged spell of extreme weather affecting a wide area of the county, the Emergency Planning team may instigate a conference involving senior management from the county council including Highways, CYPS, TCS and the Chief Executive to take a decision whether ALL DCC controlled transport should be cancelled, as it was in January 2010.

school closures

Closing a school is never an easy option. In taking a decision to close a school, the safety of pupils, staff and visitors is of paramount importance. The decision to close is delegated to school governing body and head teachers who will know local weather and ground conditions, and the likely impact of the weather on the numbers of staff and pupils who will be able to get into school. However before making the decision to close, the head teacher, with the governing body should undertake a risk assessment and decide if there is significant risk of severe injury, ill health or inability to comply with relevant legislation which would then lead to their decision to close part or all of the school.

how do I find out if a school route is running or not?

Radio: Tune into Radio Devon (94.8, 95.7, 95.8, 96.0, 103.4 & 104.3 FM) or Heart FM (97 & 103.0 FM) for information on routes that are running or have been cancelled.

DCC website: www.devon.gov.uk/schoolclosures which in periods of severe weather or major disruption will be moved onto the home page of the website. The link will contain information on both school closures and transport routes. **Telephone:** Call the MyDevon customer service centre on **0845 155 1019**.

new developments

The website mentioned above was part of a joint response to try and facilitate better communications between transport contractors, TCS, schools, CYPS, Devon residents and the My Devon customer service centre during periods of severe weather. By placing the route and school closure information on one site everyone can refer to it for updates on whether a route is running or a school is closed. Currently it is updated every ten minutes during severe weather. Devon County Council is currently working on further developments of the website which it is hoped will include direct web links to transport contractors to update their own routes and a text messaging system for schools to inform of closures.

