



Extreme Events Decision-Making Framework

Hastings School, Madrid recognises that extreme weather events and other emergencies are becoming increasingly frequent. To ensure we respond consistently and transparently, this framework outlines the principles and procedures we follow when making decisions about school operations during challenging circumstances.

Part A: Core Principles

Safety is Our Priority

The safety and wellbeing of our students and staff during travel to and from school, and throughout the school day, is paramount. We assess conditions across the entire school journey and throughout the day, not just at the moment of decision. We evaluate conditions across all our campuses, recognising that decisions may differ by location.

We Follow Official Guidance

Alerts and guidance from government authorities and local officials carry significant weight in our decision-making. When authorities advise against non-essential travel, this provides clear justification for operational changes or closure. We comply immediately with any official closure orders and communicate these promptly to families and staff.

Timely Communication

We aim to make decisions by 7:00 AM for same-day changes. Where possible, we communicate decisions the previous day to allow families adequate planning time.

We Acknowledge Uncertainty

Weather and emergency situations are inherently unpredictable. Some decisions may appear overly cautious in hindsight; others may seem insufficient. We make the best possible decision based on information available at the time of decision-making.

We Support Working Families

We recognise that many parents rely on school being open to maintain their work commitments. Sudden closures create genuine hardship for families. Where safety permits and our buildings remain fully operational (with adequate food, water, heating, and communications), we will remain open in Childcare Mode rather than close completely. However, this commitment cannot override safety considerations and cannot apply if government guidance mandates closure.

Individual Responsibility

Weather conditions and emergencies are often highly localised. Even when school remains open, families and staff must make their own assessment of travel safety. We fully support the decision of any individual to remain home if they have safety concerns, regardless of school status.



Part B: Operating Modes

Hastings School Madrid operates in one of three modes depending on conditions:

Normal Operations

Full curriculum delivery, all standard activities and schedules, and regular transportation.

Childcare Mode

School remains open to support families requiring childcare so parents can work. We recognise that high levels of staff and student absence are likely, and the day will differ from normal school operations. We commit to providing meaningful, engaging activities, which may include mixed-age groupings. No student or staff member is expected to attend if they have concerns about travel safety. Services including transport and catering may be limited, and extracurricular activities are likely to be suspended or reduced.

Early Closure

If early closure becomes necessary and communications are fully operational, we will send clear instructions enabling parents to collect their children or arrange safe travel home. School bus routes are unlikely to change due to the complexity of coordinating parent pickups. Extracurricular activities will be cancelled.

Full Closure

School closes completely due to extreme safety risks. For secondary students, work will be provided remotely where possible. We recognise that many staff do not routinely take devices home and cannot legally require this daily. If severe weather alerts are issued the day before, staff will be asked to take devices home to enable remote learning provision.

Mid-Day Closure Protocol

If the school must close during the school day and communications are unavailable, only students in Years 10–13 will be permitted to leave independently. School buses will run for these students where possible; otherwise, they may use public transport.

Older students may take younger siblings home from LST Year 7-9 only.

All other students (Pre-Nursery to Year 9) must be collected by a parent or registered caregiver (grandparent, nanny, etc.).

Parents of secondary students are strongly advised to ensure their children understand how to navigate home safely if regular transport is unavailable, as this may occur on any school day.



Part C: Decision Triggers

The following factors indicate when each operating mode may be activated. This is not an exhaustive list but provides guidance on our decision-making process.

Childcare Mode may be activated when:

- Weather conditions are challenging but not clearly dangerous
- The majority of school buses can operate reliably and private vehicle travel is possible from most areas
- We anticipate significant staff absences (20–40%) but retain sufficient staff for safe supervision ratios
- Forecasts indicate improving conditions during the school day

Full Closure will be activated when:

- Local or education authorities mandate school closure
- Transportation is likely to be extremely challenging and particularly dangerous during arrival or departure times
- School buses cannot operate
- We lack sufficient staff to maintain safe supervision ratios
- Building safety concerns exist (flooding, structural damage, loss of essential services)

Deciding between modes is not an exact science but requires professional judgement. We always err on the side of caution when in doubt.

Part D: Closing Statement

Extreme events present genuine challenges due to their unpredictability and the real risks of inadequate response. Whatever decision Hastings School Madrid makes will inevitably satisfy some families and concern others. We commit to making decisions we believe are right based on the information available at the time, guided by our unwavering commitment to safety and our responsibility to our school community.