

South Gloucestershire Council

School Closures Plan
also covers
Children & Young People Services
and
Early Years Settings

Version 5

Updates available at www.southglos.gov.uk/schoolclosures

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SECTION 1 DISTRIBUTION LIST

List of those to be provided with a copy of the plan

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
Departmental Managers Network (DMN)
Chief Officers Managers Team Management Team (COMT)
Emergency Planning Unit (EPU)
Corporate Communications
Schools/Academies/Headteachers
Sure Start Children Centres
Children and Young People Information Service
Social Care Team Managers
Youth Centres
PVI Early years Settings / childminders – for information
Vinney Green – for information
Private Schools – for information

**PLEASE REGULARLY CHECK SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE
WEBSITE FOR MOST UP TO DATE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

SECTION 2 DOCUMENT INFORMATION

2.1 This plan has been prepared and issued by South Gloucestershire CYP Asset Management & Capital Planning (AM&CP) Team as a controlled document. The content will be carefully maintained to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. The help of any organisation, whose details are contained in the document, in achieving this would be appreciated. To check that this issue is current version in use, please contact the AM&CP Team at the address below. South Gloucestershire Council recognises the benefits of the promotion of best practice and is happy for other organisations to use elements of this plan within their own documents providing that the source is acknowledged, and it is

understood that South Gloucestershire Council bears no responsibility or liability for third party use of content. Further information can be obtained from.

Asset Management & Capital Planning
Children and Young People
Badminton Road Offices
Yate
South Gloucestershire
BS37 5AF

Telephone No: 01454 863285

- 2.2 South Gloucestershire Council takes the privacy and security of the personal data for which it is responsible very seriously. These arrangements are registered under and comply with the Data Protection Act 1988.
- 2.3 Requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, relevant to this document, must be forwarded to the AM&CP Team at the address above. Please note that the nature of certain elements of this plan qualify for exemption under the FOI Act 2000.
- 2.4 The information contained within this document will be used only for the purpose of enabling the appropriate response to be made during a major incident, and will be made only to those agencies responsible for coordinating the response.
- 2.5 Document to be reviewed annually and update as appropriate

SECTION 3 AIM OF THIS PLAN

Aim

- 3.1 The aim of this plan is:
 - to provide a framework and implementation plan for the closure (or partial closure) of all schools, early years settings and other CYP establishments in order to safeguard the safety and welfare of all concerned.
 - to provide a communications plan for the provision of information in relation to the closure (or partial closure) of all schools, early years settings or other CYP establishments.
 - to provide guidance to schools, early years settings and other CYP establishments on the provision of continued learning opportunities, during a prolonged period of closure.
 - Communicating returning to normal processes

SECTION 4 ACTIVATION

- 4.1 Who has authority to activate the plan

The following personnel have authority to activate this plan

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Director for Children and Young People or Officer with delegated authority

How the plan will operate and in what circumstances e.g Pandemic situations; Severe weather situations

- 4.2 The plan may come into force when schools are required to close for extended periods e.g. in circumstances such as Pandemic situations and severe weather. It is difficult to be prescriptive about such situations. However, the Authority will strive to anticipate the situation by sign posting schools, early years settings and other CYP establishments to government advice, relevant web sites etc and by issuing relevant guidance as appropriate via the website.
- 4.3 It is essential that schools, academies, early years settings and other CYP establishments prepare for emergencies and have in place their own individual plans and ensure that all contact details both internally and council contacts are regularly updated.
- 4.4 Please note that when a school makes the decision to close, the school must notify the LA via the Schools Closure Notification System (see Appendix A). However, a Pandemic situation could result in whole scale closure of schools by either the Local Authority or another Government Agency. In this type of circumstance schools still need to be prepared with up to date Emergency Plans and contact details etc. Anyone involved in a potential school closure needs to be aware that circumstances could be different for area wide closures compared to the arrangements for the closure of an individual school or establishment. All information will be regularly updated on the South Gloucestershire website – www.Southglos.gov.uk
- 4.5 In the rare event of a decision to close all (or partial close) schools in an area for health and safety reasons , the decision to close is likely to apply to Children’s Services and Early Years Providers as well. If this decision is taken, all establishments will be contacted immediately to notify them of the decision and the website will be updated automatically. Communications will continue using the Council’s public website and CYP intranet pages.
- 4.6 All schools and academies should consider how to put in place supported learning opportunities for all children/students should a school closure occur for an extended period of time. Procedures should be developed and communicated to all staff in schools to ensure information is available to parents/carers without delay. Further information can be found at Section 6.

All establishments need to ensure that they have access to contact details of all staff, parents and carers both at the place of work and remotely. Ideally they should already have in place their own emergency plan which details how to access and contact staff, parents and carers if the establishment is closed for any reason.

Schools and other providers also need to ensure they have appropriate contact details of staff within CYP and other sections of South Glos – <http://intranet/content/CYP/Department/EdCentral/amp/index.htm>

SECTION 5 ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

5.1 Aim – To keep stakeholders informed of the most up to date information, advice and guidance.

Audience or Stakeholder group	Method of Communication	Timing of Communication	Responsibility
Schools, Academies, Youth Centres, SureStart Children's Centres	Telephone Website - General info available via link on www.southglos.gov.uk ; (Click on School Closures Button) Local radio Guidance document	Updated as required and at least daily by corporate communications and CYP Information Service.	Corporate Communications CYPIS
CYP & School Staff	E-mail Intranet Website www.southglos.gov.uk/staff (password protected) Local radio	Updated as required and at least daily by corporate communications and CYP Information Service.	CYPIS AAMP
Childcare Providers and Independent Schools	Telephone Website www.southglos.gov.uk/staff (password protected) E-mail Local radio	Updated as required and at least daily by corporate communications and CYP Information Service.	CYPIS
Members of the public, parents and carers	Telephone Website - www.southglos.gov.uk Local radio	Updated as required and at least daily by corporate communications and CYP Information Service. It is likely announcements will be made in media when something significant changes.	CYPIS
LA Contact Centres	E-mail Telephone	Updated as required and at least daily by corporate communications and CYP Information Service.	CYPIS
Members / Politicians	As required by Corporate Communications	As required by corporate communications	Corporate Communications

Daily updates for establishments available at <http://essential.southglos.gov.uk/schoolstatus/default.aspx>

Telephone Numbers	CYPIS	-	01454 868008
	Corporate Communications	-	01454 863891

SECTION 6 SUPPORTING LEARNING

6.1 Supporting Learning at Home – Primary Phase Guidance Plan Context

Local authorities and schools are required to create a plan ensuring that learning can be continued if a school has to close for an extended period of time. This may be due to a number of reasons such as:

- Staff illness leading to reduced staffing levels
- Pupil illness leading to the school being closed to prevent spread of disease (in this case pupils who are ill will obviously not be expected to continue their learning). In this case staff may still be required to be in school and working.

Aspects of this guidance can also be implemented for individuals needing to work from home.

Objective

- To ensure learner access to continued learning if a school has to be closed for an extended period

Communications Requirements

- Similar arrangements to those implemented in severe weather should be put into operation. This includes use of local radio and text alert systems to inform parents. The annual advice on extreme weather closure should take account of this.
- Wherever possible existing internal communication structures should be employed, when communicating with staff and the local authority about developments.
- Schools should keep up to date e-mail, staff and parent contact details in SIMs. Complete year group lists will also be useful so schools can target communications to specific year groups if required.
- Schools should complete a survey of home access to ICT to establish which families will not be able to access electronic communications so that alternative communications can be provided if required. Learners need to receive their entitlement to continued learning whether online or paper based.
- All primary schools should have a school web site on which they can post up to date information in case of an emergency such as a pandemic. Parents must be informed about where such emergency information can be accessed
- Texting and e-mail systems can be used but the robustness of these need to be considered. In a previous case the sending of e-mails was delayed due to the high level of e-mail use and they were not sent in time.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The school should establish a mechanism for posting learning activities on the web site. Relevant staff should be made aware of their roles and responsibilities in posting learning activities and providing feedback.
- Schools should identify any mechanisms currently used which could be exploited in the case of school closure, for example, use of Merlin to post homework activities.
- There is a need to also have contingency plans in place for addressing key responsibilities in case of illness of key staff.
- Schools should work with their technical support providers to clarify the mechanism for keeping systems working in case of closures. Support and back-up is required for managing systems in school to ensure continuity of ICT systems operation.
- Schools should ascertain who is able to access systems from home and which staff may be able to continue working from home to support learning.

Minimum Recommendation

- All primary schools should have a school web site on which they can post up to date information in case of an emergency such as a pandemic.
- Schools may choose to base learning around subscription services that they are already purchasing, for example, Superclubs, Education City, Learn Premium, I Am Learning or home licences to software like Textease.
- Schools may choose to take advantage of local authority support in seeking learning materials to support learners at home or they may choose to use Merlin to provide bespoke activity for their own learners.
- Parents must be informed about what learning information is being made available and where it can be accessed.

Additional Recommendations

Schools using learning platforms or Merlin could also use some of the following strategies to support learners at home:

- Provide web links to relevant resources for learning, for example, Woodlands Junior (<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/>).
- Provide an online discussion forum to support parents / learners with activities
- Enable pupils to post work for feedback from staff members who may still be working
- Extend any current online systems for setting homework and utilise these to set activities.
- Provide remote access to pupil files and folders to help facilitate continuity and support homeworking for students.
- Utilising prepared packages, either the school's own or commercial resources to provide additional learning activities for students.

Local Authority Support

- Local authority Advisers have listed a collection of online resources which are publicly accessible through Merlin.
- These cover a variety of subjects and generic learning skills and are available for KS1, lower and upper KS2.
- The resource list is available via a public Merlin site and can be accessed at the web link below:
<http://public.merlin.swgfl.org.uk/establishments/998la02/SupportingLearningatHome/Pages/default.aspx>
The site is available across the south west and resources will be added by Advisers from across the region.
- Schools can reference specific resources which fit in with their curriculum for learners to access at home.
- Packs will need to be available to every child if required. This could be via the web but schools will have to send these to learners that do not have web access.

6.2 Supporting Learning at Home – Secondary Phase Guidance Plan Context

Local authorities and schools are required to create a plan ensuring that learning can be continued if a school has to close for an extended period of time. This may be due to a number of reasons such as:

- Staff illness leading to reduced staffing levels
- Pupil illness leading to the school being closed to prevent spread of disease (in this case pupils who are ill will obviously not be expected to continue their learning). In this case staff may still be required to be in school and working.

Aspects of this guidance can also be implemented for individuals needing to work from home.

Objective

- To ensure learner access to continued learning if a school has to be closed for an extended period

Communications Requirements

- Similar arrangements to those implemented in severe weather should be put into operation. This includes use of local radio and/or text alert system to inform parents. The annual advice on extreme weather closure should take account of this.
- Wherever possible existing internal communication structures should be employed, when communicating with staff and the local authority about developments.

- Schools should keep up to date e-mail, staff and parent contact details in SIMs. Complete year group lists are also useful so schools can target communications to specific year groups if required.
- Schools should complete a survey of home access to ICT to establish which families will not be able to access electronic communications so that alternative communications can be provided if required. Learners need to receive their entitlement to continued learning whether online or paper based.
- All secondary schools should have a school web site or VLE on which they can post up to date information in case of an emergency such as a pandemic. Parents must be informed about where such emergency information can be accessed
- Texting and e-mail systems can be used but the robustness of these need to be considered. In a previous case the sending of e-mails was delayed due to the high level of e-mail use and they were not sent in time.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Departments should identify any mechanisms currently used which could be exploited in the case of school closure.
- Staff should be made aware of their roles and responsibilities in posting activities and providing feedback.
- Heads of department will need to work with staff to make their roles clear.
- There is a need to also have contingency plans in place for addressing key responsibilities in case of staff illness of key staff.
- Schools should identify key people who need to be on site to keep systems working.
- Support and back-up is required for managing systems in school to ensure continuity of ICT systems operation.
- Schools should ascertain who is able to access systems from home and resolve technical issues and which staff may be able to continue working from home to support learning.

Minimum Recommendation for Access to Learning Materials

- Schools should post learning activities on their web site or VLE to support learners in cases of extended school closure.
- Schools may choose to base learning around subscription services that they are already paying into, for example, Sam learning or I Am Learning.
- Schools may choose to take advantage of local authority support in seeking learning materials to support learners at home or they may choose to use their VLE to provide bespoke activity for their own learners.
- Parents must be informed about what learning information is being made available and where it can be accessed.

Additional Recommendations

Schools using their VLE or Merlin could use some of the following strategies to provide the required support for learners at home:

- Provide an online discussion forum to support parents / learners with activities
- Enable pupils to post work for feedback from staff members who may still be working
- Extend any current online systems for setting homework and utilise these to set activities.
- Provide remote access to network drives to help facilitate continuity and support homeworking for students. One example of supporting home working might be provision of home access to project folders which, once set up, can be used to post learning activities.
- Utilising prepared packages, either the school's own or commercial resources to provide additional learning activities for students.
- Feedback can be provided through a variety of mechanisms such as online discussion, through a VLE or through blogs. Where staff are already using such mechanisms their use can be extended in the event of school closure.

Local Authority Support

- A list of generic revision, learning to learn and South West Grid for learning online resources have been provided and schools can signpost their students to relevant resources to fit in with their curriculum.
- For core subjects Teaching and Learning Advisers will recommend online subject specific content and web links to support English, maths and science.
- The resource list is available via a public Merlin site and can be accessed at the web link below:
<http://public.merlin.swgfl.org.uk/establishments/9981a02/SupportingLearningatHome/Pages/default.aspx>
The site is available across the south west and resources will be added by Advisers from across the region.
- Schools can reference specific resources from the lists for learners to access at home.
- Packs will need to be available to every child if required. This could be via the web but schools will have to send these to learners that do not have web access.

6.3 Supporting Learning at Home – Special School Guidance Plan Context

Special schools are advised to take account of the guidance for primary and secondary schools as the context and objectives remain the same. In addition the following recommendations for primary and secondary schools also apply to special schools and these schools should follow the guidance which is most appropriate to their context:

- Communications requirements
- Roles and responsibilities

- Minimum recommendation
- Additional recommendations

Local Authority Support

- Local authority Advisers have listed a collection of online resources which are publicly accessible through Merlin.
- These cover a variety of subjects including generic learning skills and are available for all key stages. Schools can reference specific resources from the lists which they feel will be suitable for learners to access at home..
- The resource list is available via a public Merlin site and can be accessed at the web link below:
<http://public.merlin.swgfl.org.uk/establishments/998la02/SupportingLearningatHome/Pages/default.aspx>
 The site is available across the south west and resources will be added by Advisers from across the region.

Special schools are recommended to make use of any of the above suggestions that meet the needs of their learners. Where appropriate, specific resources for special school pupils and their parents to use with them, will also be signposted.

Packs will need to be available to every child if required. This could be via the web but schools will have to send these to learners that do not have web access.

For further or detailed information with reference to Supporting Learning please contact Jo Briscoombe on 01454 863349 or alternatively
jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

List of documents this relates to:

SGC Strategic Emergency Plan – **Hard copy issued only**

SGC Business Continuity Plan

Schools emergency guidance

<http://intranet/content/CYP/Department/EdCentral/amp/emergency/SGC%20schools%20emergency%20plan%20-%20FINAL.doc>

SGC Pandemic Flu Plan

<http://intranet/content/CYP/Department/EdCentral/amp/emergency/pandemicflu.htm>

SGC Out of Hours Manual – **Currently a restricted document**

CYP Severe Weather procedures

<http://intranet/content/CYP/Department/EdCentral/amp/emergency/severe%20weather%20letter%20August%202010.pdf>

APPENDIX A

Schools Closure Notification System

Details of new procedures for reporting changes in school opening/closing arrangements

How to update the opening status of your establishment online

The link to the new website login page is:

<http://essential.southglos.gov.uk/schoolstatus/login.aspx>

Please ensure you bookmark this page and keep a record of it alongside other emergency procedures.

IMPORTANT – YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR DEFAULT PASSWORD

The default password is set to *PASSWORD* (*in upper case*) and **must** be changed as soon as possible.

Who will be informed

Any changes made to your online opening status will immediately trigger an email message to the following recipients:

- Director for Children and Young People
- Traded Services Section (Catering and Cleaning)
- Integrated Transport Unit (Schools Transport Provision)
- Children and Young People's Departmental Emergency Management Team
- Children and Young People's Information Service & Communications team
- Corporate Communications
- Your school emergency email address (note this may not be your usual school admin email address)
- SchoolClosures@southglos.gov.uk

Should the Local Authority switch on periodic media updates such as during times of inclement weather, a regular automated message (usually every 15 minutes) confirming the opening status of all schools in South Gloucestershire is sent out by the system to the following recipients:

- Director for Children and Young People
- Traded Services Section (Catering and Cleaning)
- Integrated Transport Unit (Schools Transport Provision)
- Children and Young People Information Service
- Children and Young People's Departmental Emergency Management Team
- BBC Radio Bristol and Heart Radio
- Children and Young People Departmental Communications team

- Corporate Communications

What to expect

As soon as a decision has been taken to change the opening status of your establishment, you should log in to the above website and record the opening status as soon as possible. Upon clicking the 'Update School' button the new opening status and any additional comments added will be shown immediately on the [public webpage](#). In addition an email will be sent to the emergency email contact address on the system for your school to confirm the change in status, as well as to the Local Authority.

Please note that the school status will automatically revert to 'Open' at 6pm every evening so a daily update will be necessary

In extreme emergency situations the Local Authority may take action to close all primary schools and will update the online status of all schools accordingly.

Frequently Asked Questions

(a) Forgotten password

From the login page click the Reminder link alongside the password box. You will be asked to enter your username (last 4 digits of your DfE number) and your password will be emailed to the address on file.

(b) Unable to access registered email account

If you are unable to access the registered emergency use email account or do not receive the password reminder email, please contact the CYP admin team with your school details.

(c) General logging in problems

If you are having problems logging on to the system, please wait a few minutes and retry. If the problem persists please contact the CYP admin team (see below) with your school details.

Please note that if an incorrect password has been entered more than 3 times in succession, the system will lock out your account. You will need to contact the CYP admin team to have the account unlocked.

(d) Error messages

If you receive an error message when using the system, e.g. "Something went wrong" then please report it to the CYP admin team. In most cases your status will still be correctly updated online.

(e) Change of details

If you need to update any of the details shown on the system e.g. school website address, emergency contact email address, please contact the CYP admin team

(f) Suggestions or general comments

We welcome any suggestions or feedback on the system. Please send these to the CYP admin team.

Contact details

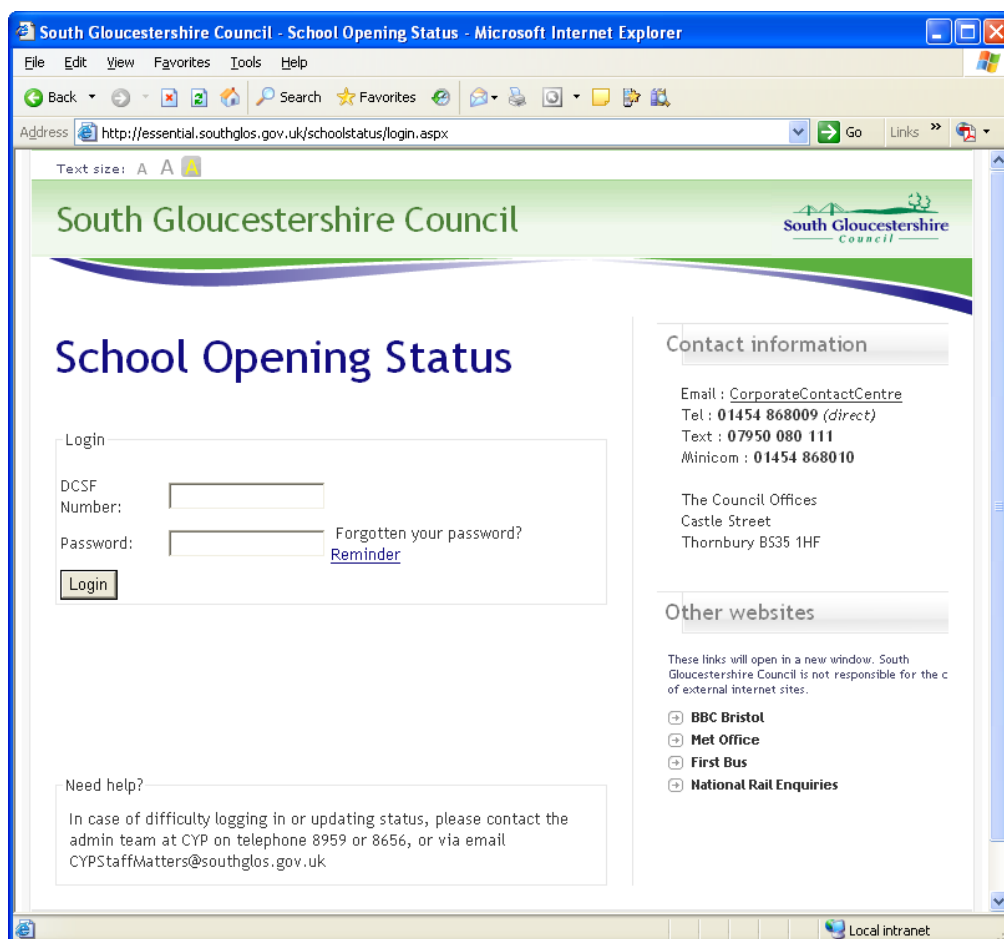
CYP admin team email: SchoolClosures@southglos.gov.uk

You can also telephone us on 01454 86 8959 or 01454 86 8656.

School opening/closing status web application

Access your school opening/closing status administration page at

<http://essential.southglos.gov.uk/schoolstatus/login.aspx>

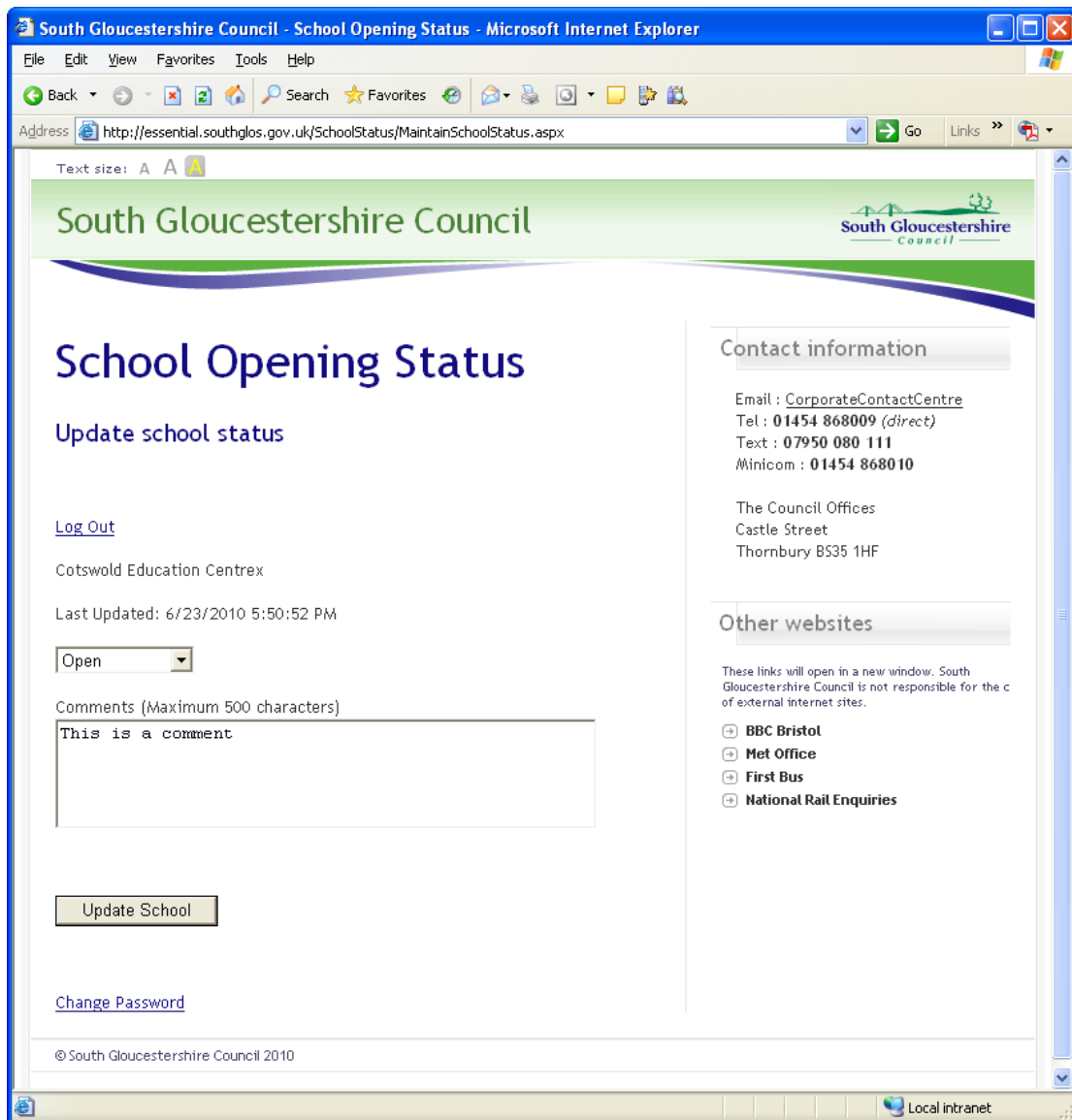


Enter the last 4 digits of your DfE number and your password and click the **Login** button.

If you have forgotten your password, click the [Reminder](#) link alongside the password box. You will be asked for your username (your DfE number – last 4 digits) and your password will be emailed to the **email address you have provided to us for emergency use. This may or may not be the same as the normal school contact e-mail address.**

Upon successfully logging in to the system, you will see the update school status page.

Please note that if an incorrect password has been entered more than 3 times in succession, the system will lock out your account. You will need to contact the CYP admin team to have the account unlocked (see end of this appendix for contact details).



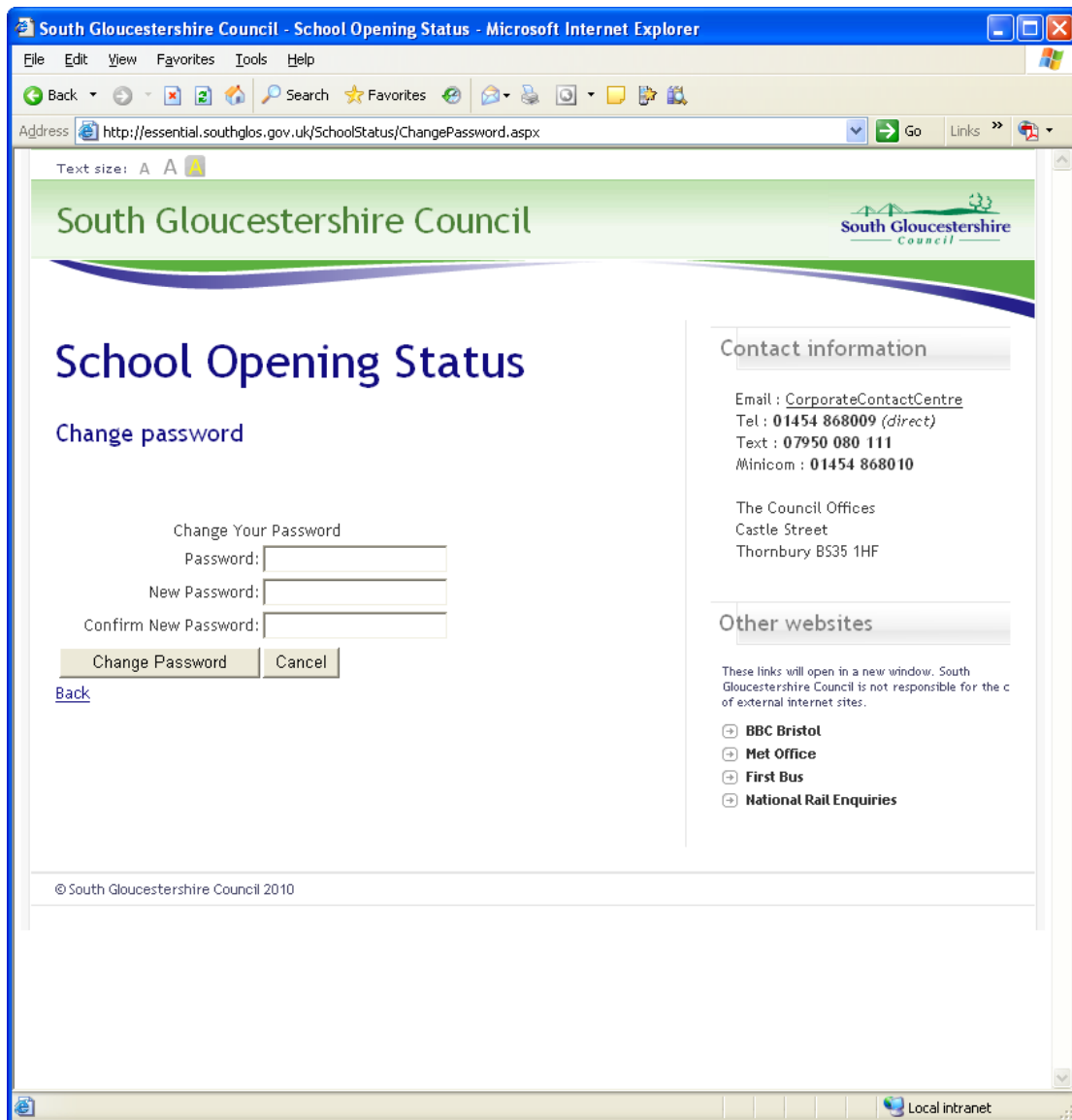
Update status

You are able to change the opening/closing status of your establishment using the drop down menu (Open, Partially open or Closed) and also enter any clarification comments (up to 500 characters) to appear on a pop up message on the public web page alongside your establishment status.

Click the **Update School button** to make the changes. The status on the public web page will be changed to reflect the new status immediately.

Note that the school status will automatically revert to open at 6pm every evening so a daily update will be necessary.

You can also change your password using the [Change Password](#) link below the update school button.



Change password

To change your password, enter your existing password followed by a new password. Click the **Change Password** button to make the changes or click **Cancel** to revert to your original password. Remember passwords are cAsE sensitive.

Finally make sure you click [Log Out](#) from the main update school status page once you have finished.

Public status of all schools

The status of all schools is reflected on the public webpage at:

<http://essential.southglos.gov.uk/schoolstatus/default.aspx>

In case of difficulties logging in or updating status, please contact the admin team at CYP on telephone 01454 86 8959 or 01454 86 8656, or via e-mail at SchoolClosures@southglos.gov.uk