

Extreme Weather Policy

Closure

It is the school's policy to remain open where risks of less supervision, lack of meal provision, inadequate heating, late journeys home, or injury are less than the disruption to pupils learning. We will only close where there is high risk to staff or children. The decision to close is at the Head and Chair of Governor's discretion only, however advice and decisions provided by the Local Authority will be adhered to. These will be made as soon as possible to balance the benefits of an early decision (parents having time to plan childcare, avoiding wasted journeys) against the risk of closing schools and finding next day that there is no problem. If forecasts make it very likely that school will not be able to open the next day then a decision the previous afternoon or evening will be made.

It is not foreseen that the school will close early once open. However, should concern be raised about staff or pupils getting home safely, then the cover procedure outlined below will be used to allow for staff members to leave early, until closure is unavoidable. Parents will be contacted about this decision by the CallParents text messaging service, asking them to collect their children as soon as possible. Where this cannot be achieved, a phone call will be made to those parents that are not covered by the CallParents system. In such case, staff will to leave the school site by 4.30pm at the latest to ensure their safety.

When a decision has been taken by the Head and Chair to close the school, this will be communicated to the Local Authority by the Head. The decision to close the school will be communicated to parents via the school website as soon as the decision has been taken. The Deputy Head Teacher will contact Heart FM, Radio WM, Xtra AM and BRMB. Staff will be notified by the Snowline. Lettings will be cancelled and notified by the Premises Manager as part of the Snowline process. No news on the status of the school should be taken to mean that the school is open.

Getting to School

As a school we expect everyone to make every reasonable effort, including walking and using public transport, to get to school in extreme weather, even if this means a late arrival. It is advisable to begin your journey earlier wherever possible. We recognise that the DCSF views pupils going to school to keep learning and school staff going to work as essential travel. It is down to the Head Teacher to make professional and common-sense judgements about what constitutes authorized or unauthorized absences and lateness during very severe weather. If the school has remained open and the Head is satisfied that the reason a child or staff member could not get to school or was late was because of the adverse weather then that absence will be authorised. However, if the Head judges that the child or staff member could have made it to school, then that

absence will be unauthorised. In the case of staff this may mean having to take unpaid leave.

Alternative Arrangements

Staff who are unable to make the journey into school should contact the Head as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements for cover can be made. Where 5 or fewer classes are affected by this, those classes will be covered by, in order of usage, floating teachers, with release time postponed for that day, Deputy, Head, ATA and other available TAs. If snow has been expected, teachers should leave a plan, or email the school a plan as soon as possible, for the day to enable the children's education to be satisfactorily maintained. Where six or more classes are affected, the decision may be need to be taken to close the school.

Access to Site

When the school is open, a path will be cleared of ice and snow and gritted from the pedestrian gate to the main entrance and also along the front parking bay by the Premises Manager. A 2 metre by 2 metre area outside the two other entrances will also be cleared and gritted. The car park and playgrounds will remain covered and every care should be taken by those using the area.

Breaktimes

Unless the conditions are severe or hazardous, then afternoon break will go ahead with the children who are suitably attired able to go out into the snow. As many staff as are available should supervise this break, including the supervision of those children not able to go out. Properly supervised snowball fights in designated areas, with sufficient distance placed between the children, are allowed. Morning breaks and lunchtimes will be considered to be indoor breaks so that children do not sit around in cold, wet clothing for the majority of the day. The Head Teacher is responsible for taking this decision.

After School Clubs

Clubs taking place indoors after school will go ahead as planned unless a decision has been taken to send staff home early or if the provider cannot make it into school. Clubs taking place outside should be moved indoors, if appropriate, or cancelled. It is the responsibility of the club leader to decide upon the feasibility and safety of the club. The Head Teacher must be informed of any cancellations at the earliest possible time by the leader of the club. Lead teachers of these clubs must also ensure that up to date lists are kept by the admin team on CallParents and that the office is notified of the cancellation so that parents can be informed of cancellations by 9.30am on the day of the club at the latest by text message or phone call and website. Wherever possible clubs should be cancelled before the day that they run and parents notified by website or text message on the day prior.

Appendix 1

Driving in Snow and Ice

1. Set out earlier to either avoid traffic or in case you get stuck in traffic.
2. Make sure you have plenty of fuel and a breakdown kit (warning triangle, torch, blanket, chocolate bar, walking boots, shovel, flask of hot drink or soup) in your car in case of emergency.
3. Remain focused and refrain from any sudden braking, sharp acceleration, and travelling at high speeds.
4. Be aware of what is around you and allow plenty of time to react to any situation, such as moving traffic.
5. Slow down long before required by not using the accelerator and by going down through the gears.
6. When pulling away from a stand-still; try and do so a higher gear such as in second as opposed to first.
7. Should you find yourself skidding, release your foot from the brake and if going off straight steer slightly in the direction of the spin.
8. Do not assume that other drivers are going to do something; in other words, expect the unexpected.