



Empowering our unique schools to Excel

St John's CE Primary School

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Policy Level:	4	ODBST Policy Guidance Member Schools may use the document to inform the drafting of their non-statutory policy. No approval from the ODBST Board is necessary.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:		
Committee responsible:	AEC	
Approved by:	AEC	
Date Approved:	16 th March 2022	
Date for Next Review:	March 2025	

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

Approved March 2022

Adverse Weather Policy

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1. St John's CE Primary school will make every effort to remain open whenever possible during periods of adverse weather.
- 1.2. If the school is anticipating closure either at the beginning of the school day or during the school day, the Headteacher will consult, wherever possible, with the Chair of Governors before any decision to close the school is made. The decision to close is a local one and will be made by leaders on site at the time who are best placed to evaluate the risks to pupils, staff, and visitors. The decision should be based on access to essential services (heating, water etc.), staffing levels, transport safety, and site safety.
- 1.3. The school may be closed if:
 - insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
 - weather conditions mean that travel to school is too hazardous.
 - conditions on site are dangerous.
 - where weather conditions are advised to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.
- 1.4. The School will set pupil home learning when the school is closed. Schools should make use of school websites and other resources to help parents to access such work.

2. PROCEDURES

- 2.1. The Health and Safety of children, parents and staff are paramount when taking any decision.
- 2.2. If the school is to consider closure School Governors would expect:
 - Consideration had been given to closing the school to just some year groups and/or changing the opening and closing time to avoid complete closure
 - Restricting access to the site/buildings as an alternative to complete closure
 - Offering a reduced curriculum provision as an alternative to closure.
- 2.3. If the decision is made to close School will communicate in as timely way as possible to limit staff and parent risks in attempting to travel to the school site:
 - families to be informed via push notification/e-mail/text message or other methods of communicating across parent groups
 - the closure to be made clear on the school's website
 - a message indicating closure is placed on the school phone system for parents who ring in
 - staff to be informed by MIS messaging or other school system
 - any before school/Breakfast Club staff and School meal providers to be included in the above
 - schools to inform their local authority through the individual LA reporting arrangements and through local media outlets as set out in LA guidance
 - schools to inform ODBST senior officers using mobile phone numbers listed in the ODBST Emergency Procedures
 - Headteachers to ensure that governors are kept informed of school closures so that they can support the decision
 - where possible, closure signs to be displayed at the entrance to the school.
- 2.4. The messaging service should be accessible through the internet so that, if school leaders are unable to get to their place of work, messages can be sent from alternative locations, e.g. from home.
- 2.5. The Headteacher and Office Manager will plan for any office cover required to manage increased volumes of parental contact either in person, by phone or email so that timely responses can be given to enquiries about school closures or other adverse weather conditions. Any additional training for extra staff will take place to ensure they are clear about the school's policies and procedures, so they provide accurate and safe information.

3. PARENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ABSENCE REPORTING.

- 3.1. There is an expectation for parents to contact the school before setting out if they have a reasonable expectation that the adverse weather conditions might reasonably cause the school to be closed. School phone systems should have a message to make clear the status of the school. Parents must let school know if pupils are on their way and likely to be delayed so that individual pupils are safeguarded on their journey.
- 3.2. School recognises there will be isolated instances where families may be cut off, even where the majority of children can get into school. In such instances school notes that parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case to be able to formally authorise the absence. Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school, risk their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.
- 3.3. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

4. CLOSURE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- 4.1. In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances the school will contact the parent via push notification/email or text message, noting the deteriorating conditions and ask for the early collection of their child/ren.
- 4.2. Parents who are delayed due to the adverse weather conditions, should contact the school as soon as possible to give an anticipated arrival time or alternative collection arrangement for their children/ren.

5. SNOW CLEARING AND SALTING

- 5.1. In the event of snow, school plans and procedures should make clear how pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children, and visitors should be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, may remain dangerous. Children should also be reminded of this in assembly and by school staff.
- 5.2. Where necessary, procedures should also note that essential pathways should be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

6. HOT AND OTHER EXTREME WEATHER

- 6.1. In the event of the weather being hotter than usual, school will:
 - ask parents to ensure their child has a sunhat and sunscreen applied before school. For older children they may be allowed to bring sunscreen into school if able to apply themselves. Parents to ask permission from school if this is required for their child and provide suitable cream.
 - encourage pupils to drink regularly including have access to sources of drinking water to fill bottles throughout the day.
 - where necessary keep pupils indoors in extreme heat
 - School may decide to cancel or postpone outdoor events during extreme hot weather. If this occurs parents will be notified of this decision.
- 6.2 In the event of extreme storms the school will take appropriate actions to ensure pupil safety through:
 - Keeping pupils inside at break and lunchtime
 - Secure or store safely outdoor equipment
 - Close school if levels of danger identified by the local or national news are identified as critical

7. LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 7.1. Buckinghamshire

<https://closures.buckscc.gov.uk/>

PREPARING FOR AND MANAGING STORMS, SNOW, AND ICE CLEARANCE PLAN

Introduction

To ensure the safety of staff, visitors and pupils at school premises, and to satisfy legal requirements for the provision of a safe working environment. This appendix takes a common-sense approach to the clearance of snow and ice during periods of bad weather.

Headteacher

- Monitoring the work of the Business Manager and Site manager in relation to Adverse weather preparation and delivery of requirements.

School Business Manager

Are responsible for:

- Delivery of this policy
- ensuring (before the winter period) that the school site is fully equipped with appropriate snow clearing and protective equipment, and adequate stocks of rock salt and sand/grit etc.
- rearranging where required Caretaker/Site Controller duties to ensure snow and ice clearance is continued if those usually responsible for the task are absent from work.
- decide and agree with the SMT the exact routes and areas of the school to be cleared in adverse weather
- all preventative work required to reduce storm damage is identified and carried out by the relevant staff
- writing /editing a formal snow clearance/gritting risk assessment in advance of bad weather identifying how the school will communicate with staff, parents & visitors the appropriate access routes to use during bad weather. The risk assessment should determine the paths that should be cleared immediately and the ones that may be left until later.

Site Controllers/Caretakers

Are responsible for:

- the immediate clearance of snow and ice in designated areas, in line with this appendix and gritting plan.
- organising and delivering any storm damage.
- ensuring that equipment provided to clear snow and ice is adequate for the purpose and maintained in a satisfactory condition
- monitoring supplies of rock salt and sand/grit mix throughout the winter period and replenished promptly.
- delivering the Adverse Weather and Appendix 1 Winter Clearance Plan temporary
- temporary closing access areas around the school in line with school policy/gritting plan that are not to be cleared or are lower down the gritting schedule, or unsafe in storms
- clearly marking (e.g. signage, tape etc) areas not to be accessed in adverse weather
- keep records of clearance and access route closures. Sign and date these

Senior Management Team (SMT)

Are responsible for:

- drafting and periodically reviewing the schools Adverse Weather and Winter Clearance policy & plan to ensure its adequacy and suitability.
- Deciding with the SBM which paths – should be made as clear as possible. clearance routes). It may be necessary for some entrances/areas to be temporarily closed; this could be achieved by taping off areas that continue to be a slip hazard as long as consideration has been given to emergency escape routes. This information should be communicated to staff and parents as soon as possible.

- Deciding which other areas– in addition to pathways/agreed access areas, in all cases access pathways should be cleared from parking spaces provided for the disabled, adjacent to premises entrances.

Please Note: It is not appropriate for school staff to clear or grit areas falling outside the school site boundary, e.g. pavements/public footpaths, roads forming part of the public highway.

All Staff

Are responsible for:

- reporting to the Site Manager/ Head Teacher any situation where the recommended action contained within the school Adverse Weather and Winter clearance policy and plan has not been carried out
- Responsible for safeguarding own and colleagues' health and safety in bad weather. Staff should also wear footwear/clothing appropriate to the conditions.

Method of Clearance:

A pathway of at least one meter wide should be cleared; this will allow suitable access for pedestrians and pushchairs/ wheelchairs. Snow and ice should be completely removed using a snow scraper or shovel, snow and ice should NOT be brushed, or dissolved using hot water, as this will make surfaces more hazardous. Once the path has been cleared rock salt should be used to assist in providing extra grip. Paths should be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure re-freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred.

Additional care should be taken when clearing sloping pathways and steps, it may be necessary for safety reasons to consider the temporary closure of some non-essential areas of the school (e.g. steep pathways, car parks, etc)

Staff, pupils or visitors:

- An assessment of the situation should be made by site staff in conjunction with the Site Manager/Head Teacher/Bursar (delete as appropriate).
- Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit, but generally it is suggested that attempts are not made to clear car parking areas/spaces themselves, unless snow is so heavy that essential vehicles (e.g. emergency vehicles, delivery lorries etc) are unable to gain access to the site.
- All persons clearing snow should be provided with suitable snow scrapers, shovels, rock salt, protective gloves, footwear and clothing (i.e. high visibility vests), and staff should take regular breaks from the task.