

School Closure due to Severe Weather

Whole school closure during severe weather conditions, such as extreme heat, flooding, storms, or snow will only be undertaken as a last resort. Every effort will be made to keep the school open during periods of severe weather.

However, there may be occasions, in the interests of health and safety for staff and pupils, where the school site may have to be closed temporarily. These could include, but are not limited to, unavailability of facilities due to significant damage (e.g. storm damage, flooding, frozen or burst pipes, breakdown in heating), large scale staff absence, inaccessibility of roads and/or site due to very heavy snowfall or other extreme weather conditions.

The school will remain open unless conditions are so difficult that the majority of staff and pupils are unable to get to school safely or it is considered a health and safety risk to have or to keep pupils in school. The following will be taken into account:

- advice from police, the local authority and other agencies (e.g. Met Office) about travel conditions and conditions around the school,
- access to the school site for pedestrians, drivers and emergency vehicles,
- safety of the school site,
- whether a sufficient number of staff are able to be on site (acceptable pupil-to-teacher ratio).

The decision whether it is safe to open and continue school during severe weather or whether the school should close rests with the headmaster who will consult with senior staff, the bursar and estates director.

Anticipating Weather Conditions

If severe weather conditions are known in advance, the school will, where possible update parents later in the day with a view to the “next day” so that suitable family arrangements can be made as required.

A decision to close the school the night before will only ever be taken when all the indications are that adverse conditions will continue overnight and there is evidence to support the closure. While it may not always be possible to make a decision the night before, the school will use existing arrangements (email/website) to update parents regularly and inform them of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

Local conditions will determine the decision of the headmaster who will consider a number of agreed criteria for closure. If there are doubts, the headmaster will defer decisions until early morning.

School closure in the event of poor weather overnight

Where weather conditions deteriorate overnight, the site will be inspected as early as possible and a decision whether to open or close the school will be communicated via School Post by 7.10am. Parents should ensure they check their email accounts.

Regular updates will then continue to be posted and notice will be given to parents, staff and pupils advising them when the school will reopen.

Enforced closure during the school day

If weather conditions deteriorate during the school day to the point that a closure is required, the school will use existing arrangements (email/website) to inform parents of the decision at the earliest opportunity. A time will be set for dismissal.

Pupils will be sent to their form rooms and those who walk or cycle to school and those using public transport, will be allowed to leave at the agreed time. Pupils awaiting collection by their

parents will be sent to wait in the school library. If pupils are unable to leave school for whatever reason, arrangements will be made to supervise them until they are able to do so.

Regular updates will then continue to be posted and notice will be given to parents, staff and pupils advising them when the school will reopen.

Remote education in the event of school closure

Should it be required to close the school site due to severe weather, remote education will be made available for pupils.

Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open, or to reopen as soon as possible.

School open but limited attendance

If the school is open but a limited number of staff and pupils are able to attend, the school will endeavour to operate a normal timetable if the pupil-to-teacher ratio is acceptable.

It may be necessary to operate a collapsed curriculum for those pupils in school or a form of hybrid teaching. Timings of the school day may need to be altered depending on the weather conditions.

Announcements and regular updates will be given on the school website.

Snowballing

Snowballing is not permitted on the school site unless under supervision in designated areas, as agreed by the deputy head: pupils.

Review

Policy Owner	Deputy Head: Pupils/Designated Safeguarding Lead
Date of last review	August 2023
Date of next review	Summer 2024

Related Documents

- DfE Emergency Planning and Response for Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings (October 2022)
- Remote Education Policy
- Procedures for Bad Weather