

Hillside Primary School



Adverse Weather Policy (inc Gritting)

Date of next review: September 2024

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of Hillside Primary School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- Make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- Advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

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It is everyone's responsibility to ensure their own safety. This is particularly important when there is a chance that an area may be slippery such as during periods of cold weather and/or snow when there is a danger of ice having formed.

1. **[Updated]** Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and UK Health Security Agency (2022) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UK Health Security Agency and NHS England (2022) 'Heatwave Plan for England'

[Updated] This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- School Closure Procedures Policy – Pupils
- School Closure Procedures Policy - Staff
- **[New]** Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- **[New]** Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- **[New]** Positive Behaviour Policy
- **[New]** School Dress Policy

2. **[Updated]** Roles and responsibilities

[Updated] The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether pupils should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment.
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of rock salt or similar alternative.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- **[New]** Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.
- **[New]** Ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety.
- **[New]** Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety.
- **[New]** Ensuring staff have received appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy, and ensuring staff act in accordance with this policy.

The site staff are responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the Headteacher of any damages.

[Updated] Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Headteacher.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.
- Liaising with one another before the end of the day to discuss an exit plan for pupils, this includes escorting younger pupils to the entrance to be collected by their parents.
- **[New]** Modelling good practice in terms of sun safety.
- **[New]** Encouraging pupils to stay appropriately hydrated.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading and adhering to school guidance.
- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.
- Keep siblings with them when waiting on the playground.

[New] Pupils are responsible for:

- Following the School Dress Policy.
- Following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.
- Attending school prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Following the Positive Behaviour Policy at all times.

3. **[Updated]** School closure

The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher and the Premises Assistant. The Chair of Governors will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site

- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- First communications will be via Dojo and via text messaging.
- Please ensure that mobile phones of the main contact are turned on. If you hear that the school is to be closed, it is always helpful to contact others you know to check the message gets through effectively.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via dojo and text message using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

[New] Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration with the Headteacher. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of pupils.

Hopefully, it will not be necessary to close the school this winter but it is always best to prepare for the eventuality just in case. A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

We urge you not to telephone the school because we need to keep the telephone lines clear for staff.

4. **[Updated] Remaining open in adverse weather conditions**

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

[Updated] If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only and all pathways on the school site, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

The site staff will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site, if there are any.

At the Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.

All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

5. Procedures for gritting

The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by pupils and staff.

- Main school gates to main entrance
- Main school gates to Breakfast Club entrance
- Top side gate to the kitchen entrance
- Side gate to FS/KS1 entrances
- Side gate to KS2 entrances

The second phase of gritting will include areas that are not covered by phase one, but are likely to be used. These include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- We will aim to grit and clear the car park when the first phase of gritting above have been treated and made safe. If this has not been completed before staff/visitors arrive we urge everyone to exercise extreme caution when moving from parked vehicles to treated paths.

The Headteacher decides which areas of the school are designated 'first phase' and 'second phase' for gritting.

The site staff ensure that the correct areas have been gritted and are safe for pupils and staff.

The site staff ensure that the relevant equipment is used during gritting, any damaged equipment is reported to the Headteacher or School Business Manager so that it can be replaced.

The supply of rock salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the School Business Manager is notified.

A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting.

6. **[Updated]** Health and safety

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds. Staff members must take responsibility for the health and safety of any pupils under their supervision.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the appropriate risk assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the Headteacher or site staff so the site can be reassessed.

[Updated] A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the site staff in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

[New] The school is committed to ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of pupils. To minimise the risk of ill health during adverse temperatures, the school will:

- Encourage staff and pupils to keep as much of their skin as possible covered up during the Summer months and wearing appropriate clothing during the Winter months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) 30 with UVA protection on any part of the body that they cannot cover up during the Summer months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Reschedule work/outdoor lessons according to the outdoor temperature.
- Encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.
- Encourage staff and pupils to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

[New] Relevant staff members will be made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions.

[New] Where a pupil is suffering from heat illness, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- Moving the pupil to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
- Cooling the pupil as rapidly as possibly, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool (25 to 30c) water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, using a fan.
- Where the pupil does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called.
- If the pupil loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the pupil will continue until the ambulance arrives.

7. **[Updated]** Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.

When a pupil cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the Headteacher believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised 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 prevent the child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

[Updated] During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the Headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

[Updated] The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

[Updated] In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff:

- No maximum class size limits are set out.
- A limit of 30 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

[Updated] The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

8. Exam disruption

If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

The school takes full responsibility for informing parents and pupils of any agreed changes concerning exams in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

9. [New] Clothing

During the Summer months, when temperatures reach above **25** degrees Celsius (°C), everyone working at or attending the school will be encouraged to protect their face, neck and ears using a sun-safe hat with a wide brim.

Pupils without sun-safe hats will only be permitted to play in an area protected from the sun, unless a sun-safe hat has been provided. Pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be required to play in an area protected from the sun, if spare clothing cannot be provided.

During the Winter months, pupils are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

10. Emergency plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure set out in the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Evacuation Policy.

11. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.