



# **Adverse Weather Policy (inc Gritting)**

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Next review date: Autumn 2023

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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.

In the case of extreme weather, any decision whether or not to close the school will be taken as early as possible rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school. The Headteacher will consult with our site staff early in the morning and make a decision about whether school will remain open. In the event of disruption caused by heavy snow the prime concern of the school must always be the safety of the pupils and staff. Each school closure is logged on a daily basis after reassessment of conditions of the site and the surrounding area and the supervision of pupils.

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.

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. School policies and procedures**

1.1. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Snow and Ice Risk Assessment
- School Closure Procedures Policy - Pupils
- School Closure Procedures Policy - Staff

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

2.1. 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 white rock salt.
- Consideration of alternative arrangements for continuity of service in the absence of the site staff.
- Reviewing this policy on at least every two years.

2.2. 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.

2.3. 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.

2.4. 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.

### **3. Decision to close**

- 3.1. The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher.
- 3.2. The Site Staff and the Chair of Governors will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.
- 3.3. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy, and if necessary, the School Closure Procedures Policy.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Once a decision has been made to close the school, the following actions will take place:
  - 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.

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

### **Emergency Closures within the school day:**

- If the school has to be closed during the school day, the school will begin a procedure for contacting parents as soon as possible that the school is being closed, through Dojo and text alerts.
- In such occasions, our main aim is to ensure the safety of the children on the school site whilst waiting to be collected.

### **Decisions to close the school:**

- The decision to close the school is a serious one. Our main consideration will always be the health and safety of our children and staff. Please be aware that all schools are different and can be affected by such situations in different ways.
- 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.
- If you update your mobile telephone number please ensure you advise the school office who will then update our system with the new number.

## **4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions**

- 4.1. When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. The Site Staff will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.
- 4.4. All pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises, following the procedures in section 5.
- 4.5. At the Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.
- 4.6. 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

- 5.1. 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
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. The Headteacher decides which areas of the school are designated 'first phase' and 'second phase' for gritting.
- 5.4. The Site Staff ensure that the correct areas have been gritted and are safe for pupils and staff.
- 5.5. Paths outside the school site are outside of the school's area of responsibility.
- 5.6. It is not practical to grit large areas of ground therefore if it is thought that playground areas are unsafe due to underfoot conditions they will not be used during the day.
- 5.7. At the end of the day if the playgrounds are considered unsafe, pupils will be directed to use the gritted pathways to their relevant exits. The supervision of pupils collected on the playground is the responsibility of parents once they have been dismissed by teachers.
- 5.8. It may be possible for paths to have become unsafe during the day when there is no site staff cover available to grit the paths. It is therefore very important that extreme care is taken when entering and exiting the school premises later in the day.
- 5.9. 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.
- 5.10. The supply of rock salt is monitored by the Site Staff– if supplies are low, the Business Manager is notified.
- 5.11. A record is made, by the Site Staff, of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting.

## **6. Health and safety**

- 6.1. The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.
- 6.6. If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the Snow and Ice 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 safety can be reassessed.
- 6.7. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the Site Staff will assess the school site early in the morning and inform the Headteacher of the state of site.
- 6.8. A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.
- 6.9. Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.
- 6.10. When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.



## **7. Limited staff numbers**

- 7.1. During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, whether this means they will be late or not.
- 7.2. Staff members are expected to assess the availability of all public transport and consider the feasibility of walking to work, if they live relatively close and are fit and able to do so, in order to attend work.
- 7.3. The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk.
- 7.4. In line with 7.3, it is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.
- 7.5. Staff members are required to consider local weather conditions, distance, availability of public transport and fitness to walk when making their decision.
- 7.6. Staff members are required to liaise with the Headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

## **8. Attendance statistics**

- 8.1. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. 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.

## **9. Exam disruption**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. 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.

## **10. Emergency Plans – Business Continuity 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**

- 11.1. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.
- 11.2. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years by the Headteacher.