**Heather Primary School Bad Weather Policy**



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| **This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Heather Primary** | **Date – March 2019** |
| **Signed**  | **Chair – Caroline Ludlam**  |

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| Version | Date | Author | Reason For Change  |
| 0.2 | Nov 2022 | MM | Review - update signatory  |

**Heather Primary School**

**Policy for Adverse Weather Conditions**

Predicting the weather is often very difficult, we often don't know when we might be affected by severe winter again, however we can take steps to ensure that we are prepared when severe weather happens. It is the policy of the school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors in consultation.

Every effort must be made to keep schools open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend. There is a legal requirement to keep schools open for children to attend for 190 days per year. However, schools may close due to “unavoidable” circumstance, which are usually health and safety reasons. Unavoidable circumstances are those that mean it is no longer safe for staff or pupils to be onsite.

This guidance provides advice on:

1. Risk assessments/management
2. Preparation for severe weather conditions
	* Check the weather forecast
	* Ensure the building has been maintained
	* Ice and Snow
	* High winds
3. Ensure Adequate Supervision
4. Announcing the school closure or partial closure
5. Useful websites

*NB We cannot make a judgement about the safety of individual routes to school for our children and their families; we can only risk assess on the conditions directly affecting the school, and parents are asked to make their own judgement about the safety of the routes they can take if school is open.*

**Preparation for severe weather conditions**

To prepare for opening when there are severe weather conditions, the headteacher should take the following actions:

1. **Check weather forecast**

The decision to close must be assessed by the headteacher. This must be based on regular checks of the weather forecast via news and websites.

The Met Office website home page [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

BBC weather [http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/)/

1. **Ensure the building has been maintained**
* Boilers and heating systems are maintained regularly and ventilation if free from obstruction
* Repair any dripping taps
* Ensure tanks and pipes are properly lagged
* Know where the mains water valve (main stop cock) is located in case of frozen pipes
* Check for cracked or dislodged tiles
* Ensure that drains and gratings are clear
* Check your lighting
* Check the condition of your absorbent mats.
* Radiators should be kept clear of obstruction to enable a proper circulation of warmed air
* Where curtains or blinds are fitted these should be closed at night to retain heat.
* Doors between areas of differing temperatures should be kept closed a s much as possible
* Consider leaving heating on a low setting overnight
* Clear fallen leaves regularly
1. **Ice and Snow**

To reduce the risk of slips on ice, frost or snow assess the risk and put in a system to manage it.

* Ensure salt/sand stocks are plentiful
* Identify the outdoor areas used by pedestrians most likely to be affected by ice i.e. building entrances, pedestrian walkways, slopes and areas in constantly shade or wet.
* Put a procedure in place to prevent any icy surface forming and/or keep pedestrian off the slippery surface.
* Grit/salt on areas prone to be slippery in icy conditions. Gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the ground temperatures are at, or below freezing. The best time is early in the evening before the frost settles or if this is not possible early in the morning before people arrive. Salt does not work instantly and needs time to dissolve in to the moisture on the ground.
* Divert pedestrians to less slippery walkways and barrier off existing ones.
* If warning cones are used, remember to remove them once the hazard has passed
* It is not always necessary to clear the car park of snow as it can be taken out of use until such time as it is safe to be used, with staff making alternative parking arrangements.
1. **High winds**

When high winds are experienced that are, or have been forecast with gusts of speeds of 80mph visual checks should check for loose structures such as:

* Tiles Masts
* Lean-tos
* Sails
* Wires etc

This must be done before and after high winds are forecast and be carried out from ground level.

**Ensure Adequate Supervision**

The school must ensure staff to pupil ratios are maintained.

* Estimate how many staff members need to get in to school to operate safely.
* Identify how many staff would be safe to travel to work in severe conditions Staff Planning From (Appendix 2)

Please remember we cannot insist a member of staff drive in to school; however, the expectation is that staff will turn up irrespective of weather conditions except in the most extreme cases where they can demonstrate a high degree of risk

**If the school is to close:**

1. Is possible we will endeavour to decide as to whether the school needs to close by 7:00am
2. During periods of extended adverse weather, the decision may be made the day before.
3. During severe weather the Head teacher will review their risk assessment throughout the day. It is expected school will remain open until normal time, however if a revised risk assessment indicates circumstances have changed to such an extent that the Head teacher believes conditions are now unsafe, school may make the decision to close early.
4. Any children at school should remain there until the head teacher is satisfied appropriate alternative arrangements have been made.
5. School must never close completely unless the head teacher is certain that no child will present his/herself. A member of school staff must remain on site in case any students or staff arrive at school after it has announced it is closed. Arrangements must always be made for security of children and parental assent must be sought if sending them home.

**School Closure Procedure**

1. We will send a message via WEDUC and post a message on the WEDUC news feed out to all parents and staff on the contact details they keep updated with us.
2. We will notify Radio Leicester, who will broadcast the information and add the school to the list of school closures.
3. We will put a notice on the front page of the school website www.heatherprimary.co.uk
4. A message will be posted on the school’s twitter feed @HeatherPrimary – this message may be copied to the PTA’s Facebook Page

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However, parents are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances, 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 so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority. 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 risks their child being registered as an un-authorised absence. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

If school is open, we request that parents send their children into school with appropriate clothing such as wellies, coat, hat, gloves, thick socks etc.

In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and via WEDUC and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

Before and after school opening hours, parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.

**In icy conditions the Premises Officer will grit wide pathways as follows:**

A) from school path beside the car park gates to the front door

B) from the ‘pre-school’ gate on the front playground to the pre-school door

C) From the pre-school door to the main entrance for the school office

Where necessary, essential pathways will be kept as clear as possible throughout the day.

On school days where the school is closed to pupils, where possible the pathways will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the Premises Officer, so as to keep them clear and prevent build up of ice and snow.

During significant adverse weather conditions, classrooms will be open from 8.45am for parents to bring their children inside, straight to their classrooms.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to parents and children at the beginning and end of school, and if the Head Teacher judges it necessary, at break times as well.

In the Head Teacher’s absence, the senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

**HEATHER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Bad Weather Policy**

**PARENTS**

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

**HEAVY OVERNIGHT SNOW CONDITIONS IN THE AREA.**

Should the conditions around the school be a cause for concern in the morning, the Headteacher will telephone Radio Leicester as soon as possible to state that the school will be closed. Information will also be on the school’s website and a text will be sent out to all parents and families. We aim to make a decision and inform parents by 7am wherever possible.

**DAYTIME SNOW CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE AREA.**

Should children need to leave early due to worsening conditions, a message via WEDUC will be sent out asking parents to collect their children from the school.

**EMERGENCY SUPERVISION**

Supervision will be available for the children for as long as is necessary at the end of the sessions.

It would be preferable for parents to arrive at the school to collect their children without telephoning first. This way the telephone lines are not jammed by incoming calls.

**STAFF**

In the case of very bad weather, the decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors in order to maintain Health, Safety and Wellbeing within the school. We need to know that we can maintain safe adult:child ratios in school. Staff members are requested to contact the Headteacher or Office Manager before 6.50am at the latest if they are unable to come into school because of severe weather conditions affecting their journey.

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions during the day, the Headteacher will make the decision as to which staff need to leave the school early, if possible, if they live in areas where conditions are becoming very serious or less accessible in poor weather.

**Appendix 1**

Statement that will be on the school Website

**School Closures due to bad weather**

The decision to close a school due to bad weather is taken by the head teacher rather than Leicestershire County Council. Before making the decision, head teacher weighs up a number of factors including;

* the local weather conditions,
* the weather forecast
* road conditions,

in order to consider how these impact on pupil and staff safety.

Please see this article about [school snow closures](https://www.gov.uk/check-school-closure) for more information.

How the process works;

* Head teacher decides to shut school – this decision is made as early as possible to ensure parents can be made aware as soon as possible.
* School Office will send a message via WEDUC parents to inform them. (Please ensure we have an up to date mobile number on file).
* School will Tweet the school closure through Twitter. @HeatherPrimary
* School will put the message onto the website via the live Twitter link.
* Head teacher contacts BBC Radio Leicester who will include our school closure as part of their list of closed school. BBC Radio Leicester 104.9 FM (www.bbc.co.uk/radioleicester)

**Appendix 2 - Winter Gritting & Snow Clearing Record**

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| Date:  | Person(s) undertaking the task:  |
| What time did gritting/snow clearing take place? |  |  |  |  |
| Describe weather conditions What is the outside temperature (approx.) and time of measurement? |  |  |  |  |
| Which routes/paths were gritted/cleared of snow?  |  |  |  |  |
| Was there warning ice/snow signs displayed at entrances to the gritted/snow cleared routes/paths? | Yes/No | Yes/No | Yes/No | Yes/No |

Plan of the premises to indicate the routes/paths gritted/snow cleared

Signed……………………………………………

Date………………………………………….

**Severe Weather - Staff Planning Form - Appendix 3**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Distance travelled to school** | **Have they got arrangements to stay locally?** | **Are they confident to drive in poor weather conditions?** | **Have they been driving for more than 12 months?** | **Are they a single carer?** | **Have they any disabilities?** | **Are they pregnant?** |
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**Advice For Schools Appendix 4**

Procedure for contacting BBC Radio Leicester - 0116 251 17369 or 01162016644

* Phone don’t email
* Ring once only
* Person making the call will need:
	+ School Dfee Number
	+ Full address of school
	+ Password –
	+ Brief message – open from???, school is closed…

Grit Supplies

* Minimum order is 250kg
* Property Helpdesk – 0116 3055000 – LTSServiceDesk@leics.gov.uk