

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

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1.0 Policy Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 In order to maintain continuity of teaching and learning for our students and to minimise the impact upon parents/carers, students and other family members, the intention is for President Kennedy School to remain open as usual whenever possible. Therefore, we must at all levels, strive to maintain the working environment to a suitable and sufficient standard at all times. The aims of this policy are to:
- Ensure that the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, whenever practically possible, providing this can be done in a safe manner that does not affect the users of the school.
 - Ensure that the decision to close the school is understood by and communicated to students, staff, parents and carers.
 - Keep to a minimum the amount of time the school is closed during adverse conditions
- 1.2 There may be certain situations in which adverse weather means that the school is not able to operate in a safe way, and so the school will make the decision to close. This policy outlines the situations in which this may occur and what procedures and actions will be in place to ensure that it is able to stay open or if absolutely necessary, what the procedures will be upon closure.
- 1.3 Adverse weather could encompass a number of situations, such as flooding, storms, exceptionally high temperatures, etc. However, it is most likely that the adverse weather would refer to snow and ice.
- 1.4 The decision to close the school will be made by the Local Governing Committee of the school, with specific delegated responsibility to the Headteacher, or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher. This decision will be made in consultation with the Operations team.
- 1.5 The following five conditions will be considered in the decision-making process. If any one of these conditions cannot be guaranteed, the decision may be made to close:
1. Safe conditions around the school site (school site, site entrances, on site roadways and the car park) and there are no major obstacles or danger which presents risk to the Health & Safety of any member of the school community (staff, students, parents, visitors).
 2. Sufficient number of staff are able to get to school.
 3. Availability of meals.
 4. Availability of sufficient heat, light and water.
 5. Advice from Police or Fire Authorities
- 1.6 It is sometimes appropriate to amend the opening hours of the school rather than close the school, e.g. opening later in the day or shortening the day. This should always be considered as an alternative to closure.

Specific responsibilities contained within the policy and procedures contained within it:

Facilities Manager / Site Services Officers	Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Risk Assessment • Contact Operations Manager and Headteacher if unsafe site • Implement and co-ordinate actions to make the site safe. • Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe. • Ensure appropriate levels of stock of necessary tools and equipment to make site safe (e.g. fully operational shovels, spreader, sufficient grit) • Ensure staff wear appropriate PPE (high visibility jacket) when clearing snow/ice • Check the utility truck/plough is maintained regularly and has the correct oil level before use. • Ensure the site has enough grit/salt to ensure that the car parks, driveways and pathways are safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be contactable by the Operations Manager, Facilities Manager or Site Services Officer and Deputy Headteacher. • Be available to come onsite to inspect the safety for the school community. • Keep in contact with the Local Governing Committee regarding decisions. • Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe. • Inform the Local Authority of the closure and when the school is open again via the Council website. • Inform the Trust CEO and Deputy CEO of any school closure and reopening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be contactable by the Headteacher. • Liaise with the Local Governing Committee about decisions. • Inform The Futures Trust if the school is to be closed.
Operations Manager	Parents and children	School staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Headteacher if site is unsafe • Implement and co-ordinate actions to make the site safe. • Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe. • Support the Headteacher in informing Snowline if school is to be closed. • Ensure that Parents /Carers are notified of school closure via message on school answerphone, website and SIMS Intouch/Class Charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check local media, websites etc. for details about opening, closures • Ensure personal safety around school grounds – following advice etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marketing Officer will post an announcement and updates on the school website about school closure and re-opening. • A member of the admin team will send texts and emails to parents /carers and post updates around school closure and re-opening. • Notify leadership team if problems getting into work but that you will be on duty from home. • Ensure personal safety around school grounds. • May assist as necessary and reasonable in helping to make the site safe.

2.0 Keeping the school open: preventative measures

2.1 The school site will be risk assessed daily by the Facilities Manager or a member of the Site Services Officer (SSO) team.

- 2.2 If the initial Risk Assessment suggests that there is a risk to the safety of the school community, necessary preventative measures will be considered. At this point, the Facilities Manager or SSO will notify the Headteacher to discuss the plan of action.
- 2.3 In the case of snow or ice, the SSO team will be tasked with clearing snow and laying salt and grit on arrival to ensure that the car parks, driveways and pathways are safe. This must be done by 6.30am for the salt and grit to take effect.
- 2.4 When making the site safe, the following list will be followed in order of priority. This work must be completed by 7:30am when staff and students start to arrive in large numbers:
1. Car park is safe.
 2. Main pedestrian access point onto site is safe.
 3. Main entrance is clear and safe.
 4. Clear and safe fire evacuation routes to and from the two teaching blocks and to the tennis courts and multi-use games area (MUGA) where the Fire Assembly Points are.
 5. Access to and from the sports block
- 2.5 If the first four areas listed above are safe, then the school is able to open.
- 2.6 Some alternative arrangements may be in place for the school day to ensure safe operation. This list may include (but is not exhaustive):
1. Students to come into school at a slightly later time to allow for all conditions to be secure and safe.
 2. Students not allowed outside at break and lunchtimes, or may have restricted access to specific areas of the school grounds. May have access to the field under increased supervision.
 3. Students to use the main internal access routes and be supervised when using external access routes.
 4. Additional staffing on main gate and driveway upon school drop off and collection times.
- 2.7 Health and Safety is a shared responsibility as such, ensuring that the entire school site is safe will not be the sole responsibility of the Facilities Manager or the SSO on shift. Any member of staff who is on-site and available to help may volunteer to do so.
- 2.8 All staff should wear suitable and appropriate clothing and footwear as dictated by the weather. Individuals should take responsibility for their own safety by adhering to this recommendation.
- 2.9 Staffing ratios will also be assessed to check whether levels will be appropriate to ensure that the school runs safely and effectively. It may be that teachers and/or Teaching Assistants and Learning Mentors need to be flexible in their how they can support the school if there are staffing challenges. Examples could include covering other subjects, supporting larger classes, team-teaching, etc.
- 2.10 It is recognised that severe weather conditions can make it difficult for some staff to get to and from the school; however, the expectation is that staff will make every effort to present themselves at school unless advised to the contrary by the Headteacher.

- 2.11 If staff are unable to get in to school, they are expected to complete administrative tasks and set student work as required during the working day.
- 2.12 In the event of closure, staff will be informed via email, the school's website, and via local media (radio/social media).
- 2.13 In the event of adverse weather conditions during a weekend or non-working day, the SSO team and Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher will meet to assess the site and if safe and practical, a team of local volunteers may help to prepare the site for the next working day.

3.0 Making the decision to close the school

- 3.1 If any one of the conditions listed in Section 1.5 are not met, the Headteacher may make the decision to close the school.
- 3.2 However, risks should be assessed realistically and preventative action such as salting and gritting should be taken into account.
- 3.3 The decision to close the school will be made by the Local Governing Committee of the school, with specific delegated responsibility to the Headteacher, or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher. This decision will be made in consultation with the Operations and Facilities Managers.
- 3.4 The decision to close will be made where possible by 7.00am, on the basis of information from:
- Media about the weather, condition of local roads, paths and public transport
 - Met Office
 - Local Authority
- 3.5 The decision will be made as early as possible, if possible, the day before. School staff will be informed via email and the school website. The school will contact Coventry City Council's Snowline (<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/snowlinelogin>) who will inform local radio stations including Free Radio, BBC C&W and BBC WM.
- 3.6 Parents/carers will be informed via:
- The front page of the school's website.
 - Parents / carers to be notified via a text message to the mobile number we hold on record
 - Notification of closure posted on the school gates as soon as practicable
 - The school social media pages on Facebook and Twitter
 - Local Radio.

Parents should be encouraged to listen to the local radio stations for up to date information, they can also find information at www.coventry.gov.uk/schoolclosures

Closures will also be reported on Coventry City Council's Twitter account www.twitter.com/coventrycc and Facebook account www.facebook.com/coventrycc

- 3.7 The Futures Trust will be contacted as early as possible to alert them to the decision.
- 3.8 The school will inform the Local Authority of the closure and when the school is open again via the Council website.
- 3.8 Where possible, a member of staff will be in the school to operate telephones and re-direct children who have not received the message by school opening time.
- 3.9 The site will be further Risk Assessed throughout the day and parents notified whether the school will be open on the next day at the earliest possible time.

4.0 If weather conditions deteriorate during the working day

- 4.1 If weather starts to deteriorate during a working day, and any one of the conditions (listed under 1.5) are not met, the Headteacher may make the decision to close the school or finish early for the day. In such an instance, parents will be notified to collect their children at the earliest available opportunity.
- 4.2 However, risks should be assessed realistically and preventative action such as salting and gritting should be taken into account.
- 4.3 Staff will work together, under the direction of the Headteacher, to ensure that preventative action can be taken if possible.
- 4.4 Students who have no access to home will remain in school and arrangements will be made to ensure the safety and security of these students with the school, until either collected or until parents contact the school with alternative arrangements. Staff will be delegated to remain onsite to supervise these students until a parent/carer arrives to pick them up. This would normally be staff who live closest to school.

5.0 Responsibility of parents/carers

- 5.1 Parents/carers are expected to check the school website, text and email messages and social media accounts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.
- 5.2 The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents/carers informed as to the situation during adverse weather conditions, as we understand that such conditions and the possibility of closure may place considerable difficulties upon them.
- 5.3 Whilst the school endeavours to ensure contact details are up to date for the purposes of text message and email communication, it is also the responsibility and duty of parents/carers to inform us if any contact details have changed.

6.0 Recording absence

- 6.1 Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence. Where the school not officially closed, parents/carers should still endeavour to contact the school to let us know their child is on their way or if they are likely to be seriously delayed as we still have a statutory duty to record attendance correctly.
- 6.2 We appreciate that adverse or severe weather may mean that pupils arrive later than normal. Parents/carers acting on the assumption that the school would be officially closed without first obtaining official confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents their child coming into school risks them child being recorded as unauthorised absence as per the school attendance policy.

Appendix A: Guidance for volunteers

Anyone clearing snow from outside their own property or someone else's property would only be liable for an accident if their efforts actually made the pavement less safe than it was with the snow and ice undisturbed and as a result somebody is injured.

Volunteers spreading salt/grit for clearing snow from the school site at times of severe weather should:

- Wear a high visibility vest or jacket. A vest can be worn over normal clothing. A jacket can be worn in place of a normal coat.
- Wear warm clothing and stout footwear which will provide a good grip. Physical work will warm up the body so be prepared to shed layers, but remember that your body will quickly cool down once you cease working.
- Ensure that someone is aware that you have gone out to carry out this work and how long you intend to be there for. Remember also to advise that person of your return.
- Assess the location before commencing work. Do not attempt to work if you feel conditions would make this unsafe - for example, if visibility is poor, there are too many vehicles entering the site or conditions are so severe that you would be placing yourself at risk of slipping or extreme cold.
- Use the PPE that will be provided, such as gloves, high visibility vests etc.
- Always be aware of approaching traffic. Remember the conditions may mean that traffic will have difficulty stopping. Try to work in pairs so that someone can observe the traffic.
- Use the grit sparingly and thinly. Spread a small amount on a shovel and sprinkle gently. The material in the grit bins is a mixture of salt and grit. The salt will help to speed up the process of thawing snow and ice. The grit is intended to provide grip on the surface of compacted snow or ice.
- When spreading salt/grit on the pavements it is better to remove most of the snow and then spread the salt/grit mixture.
- If shovelling snow, use a shovel with the widest blade available. Make a line down the middle of your path first so you have a safe surface to walk on. Then you can simply shovel the snow from the centre to the sides.
- Care should be taken to avoid blocking access points to properties, driveways, paths (especially at pedestrian crossings and drains). The cleared snow should be deposited in the verge or areas that are non-trafficked.
- Use salt or sand – not water. If you use water to melt the snow, it may refreeze and turn to black ice. Black ice increases the risk of injuries as it is invisible and very slippery. If salt is not available from the grit bins, you can use ordinary table or dishwasher salt - a tablespoon for each square meter you clear should work. Avoid spreading on plants or grass.
- Do not be put off clearing paths because you are afraid someone will get injured. Remember, pedestrians walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to be careful themselves.
- Pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways – you might need to use more salt on these areas.

- Clear the snow or ice early in the day. It's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has been packed together from people walking on it. So if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.
- When using the site truck with the plough attachment, check that the plough is correctly attached and held onto the chassis firmly with the split pin. Do not attempt to drive over the site speed bumps with the plough attachment on. Always check that the truck hydraulic fluid is at the correct level.