



# **POLICY FOR ADVERSE WEATHER**

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## 1.0 Policy Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 At all points, we aim for President Kennedy School to remain open as usual whenever possible. 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.
- 1.2 Adverse weather could encompass a number of situations, such as heavy rainfall, extremely strong winds etc. However, it is most likely that the adverse weather would refer to snow and ice.
- 1.3 The decision to close the school will be made by the Local Governing Body of the school, with specific delegated responsibility to the Headteacher. The following four 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 presenting major obstacles or danger which presents risk to the Health & Safety of any member of the school community (staff, students, parents, visitors). However, risks should be assessed realistically and preventative action such as salting and gritting should be taken into account.
  2. Sufficient number of staff are able to get to school.
  3. Availability of meals.
  4. Availability of sufficient heat, light and water.

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

<b><u>Facilities Manager / Site Services Officer</u></b>	<b><u>Headteacher</u></b>	<b><u>Deputy Headteacher</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Contact Operations Director if unsafe site</li> <li>• Implement and coordinate actions to make the site safe.</li> <li>• Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate levels of stock of necessary tools and equipment to make site safe (eg fully operational shovels, spreader, enough grit)</li> <li>• When adverse weather please ensure a high visibility jacket is worn.</li> <li>• Check the site truck plough is functioning correctly and has the correct oil level before use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be contactable by the Facilities Manager or Site Services Officer and Deputy Headteacher.</li> <li>• Be available to come onsite to inspect the safety for the school community.</li> <li>• Keep in contact with the Board of Governors regarding decisions.</li> <li>• Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe.</li> <li>• Support the Facilities Manager or Site Services Officer in making the site safe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be contactable by the Headteacher.</li> <li>• Liaise with the Governing Body about decisions.</li> <li>• Inform The Futures Trust if the school is to be closed.</li> </ul>

<b>Operations Manager</b>	<b>Parents and children</b>	<b>School staff</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor Site Risk Assessments .</li> <li>• Contact Headteacher if unsafe site</li> <li>• Implement and coordinate actions to make the site safe.</li> <li>• Follow agreed action plan for ensuring site is safe.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate levels of stock of necessary tools and equipment to make site safe (eg fully operational shovels, spreader, enough grit)</li> <li>• Inform Snowline if school is to be closed.</li> <li>• Ensure that Parents and Carers are notified of school closure via school website and SIMS Intouch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check local media, websites etc for details about opening, closures</li> <li>• Ensure personal safety around school grounds – following advice etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Marketing Officer posts updates on school website around school closure and re-opening.</li> <li>• A member of the Customer Communications Team texts and emails Parents and Carers to post updates around school closure and re-opening.</li> <li>• Notify leadership team if problems getting into work but that you will be on duty from home.</li> <li>• Ensure personal safety around school grounds.</li> <li>• May assist as necessary and reasonable in helping to make the site safe.</li> </ul>

## 2.0 Keeping the school open: preventative measures

- 2.1 The school site will be Risk Assessed daily by the Facilities Manager or Site Services Officer. This will be logged on the appropriate form and monitored by the Operations Director.
- 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 Site Services Officer will notify the Headteacher to discuss the plan of action and create a specific Adverse Weather Risk Assessment.
- 2.3 In the case of snow or ice, snow should be cleared and grit laid down early enough to allow time for it to become effective (at least 1 hour from gritting before the school community arrive).
- 2.4 When making the site safe, the following initial priority list will be followed. This must all be safe by 7:30am when staff and children 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 fire evacuation routes to and from the Teaching Block and to the Tennis Courts are safe.
- 2.5 If each aspect of the initial priority list is safe, the school can remain open as long as all conditions in 1.3 are met. Alternative arrangements will need to be in place for the arrival of children to school; all children to enter via normal routes.
- 2.6 Once initial priority list points are made safe, the next priority points should be made safe: access to and from Sports Block.
- 2.7 If these are safe, the school is able to open. Some alternative arrangements may be in place for the school day to ensure safe operation. This list may include (but is not exhaustive):

1. Children to come into school at a slightly later time to allow for all conditions to be secure and safe.
  2. Children not allowed outside at break and lunchtimes. May have access to the field under increased supervision.
  3. Children 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.
- 2.8 It is assumed that making sure the whole school site is safe will not be the sole responsibility of the Facilities Manager or Site Services Officer. Any member of staff who is on-site and available to help may volunteer to do so.
- 2.9 At every point, it is each person's responsibility to take care when walking on snow or ice and to wear appropriate footwear for the conditions. This includes every member of the school community. The school may remind members of the school community about this.
- 2.10 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 may need to support in the operation of the school by supporting other members of staff who cannot attend – eg supporting larger classes, team-teaching.
- 2.11 It is recognised that adverse weather conditions will, at times, make travel to and from work difficult. However, employees are expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach their workplace. In the event of closure, staff will be informed via email, the school's website, and via local media.
- 2.12 The school will communicate with the school community that the school is open and notify them of any alternative arrangements in place for school drop off on:
- The front page of the school website and by text message and email.
- 2.13 The Futures Trust will be notified that the school will remain open.
- 2.14 In the event of adverse weather conditions during a weekend or non- working day, the Site Service Officers and Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher will meet to assess the site and, if practical and safe, 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 the Risk Assessment deems that any one of the considerations are not met, the Headteacher may make the decision to close the school:
1. Safe conditions around the school presenting major obstacles or danger which presents risk to the Health & Safety of any member of the school community (staff, children, parents, visitors). However, risks should be assessed realistically and preventative action such as salting and gritting should be taken into account.



2. Sufficient number of staff are able to get to school.
  3. Availability of meals.
  4. Availability of sufficient heat, light and water.
  5. Availability of public transport for students and staff.
- 3.2 This decision will be made as early as possible, if possible, the day before. School staff will be informed via email and the school website. Parents will be informed via:
- The front page of the school's website.
  - Email and text message.
  - Local Radio
- 3.3 Snowline (<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/snowlinelugin>), local radio stations including Free Radio, BBC WM and The Futures Trust will be contacted as early as possible to alert them to the decision.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Staff will be notified at the earliest possible moment about a decision via telephone, email and the school's website.
- 3.6 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, the following conditions will be considered:
1. Safe conditions around the school presenting major obstacles or danger which presents risk to the Health & Safety of any member of the school community (staff, children, parents, visitors). However, risks should be assessed realistically and preventative action such as salting and gritting should be taken into account.
  2. Sufficient number of staff are able to get to school.
  3. Availability of meals.
  4. Availability of sufficient heat, light and water.
- 4.2 Staff will work together, under the direction of the Headteacher, to ensure that action are in place so that these conditions are met.
- 4.3 If these conditions 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.
- 4.4 Staff will be delegated to remain onsite to supervise vulnerable children until a parent or guardian arrives to pick them up. This would normally be staff who live closest to school.



## 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 highway 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, traffic flows are too high or conditions are so severe that you would be placing yourself at risk of falling or extreme cold.
- 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. But avoid spreading on plants or grass.
- Do not be put off clearing paths because you are afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people 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.