



St Nicholas CE Primary School

Policy Title:	Severe Weather
LT Responsibility:	Head Teacher
Review Body:	SLT
Date:	January 2019
Review:	January 2021

Context

Many schools face difficulties in maintaining a normal service during severe weather conditions, such as a heavy snowfall or icy roads and footpaths. Local and national guidance to head teachers, however, is that they should remain open wherever possible, to minimise the disruption to children's education and the inconvenience to parents and families. Schools are advised to have plans in place to enable a suitable programme of education to be provided for pupils who do attend, albeit with reduced numbers of staff. Head teachers are required to weigh up the risks of reduced supervision, late journeys home and minor bumps, against the disruption to learning caused by a closure.

Nevertheless, the Headteacher has complete discretion to close the school in anticipated severe conditions that would put pupils at risk. Where possible the school will contact parents to let them know of such a decision and every care will be taken to ensure that pupils are not sent out in dangerous conditions.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Headteacher. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff members are able to come in to keep the school running safely;
2. Conditions on site are dangerous;
3. Conditions are considered to be, or anticipated to become, too hazardous for travel.

Action Plan

The school will remain open whenever possible.

If this is not possible, the school may initiate a delayed start to the day.

If the 'Severe Weather Procedure' is implemented, families should first delay their journey to school in accordance with the communicated starting time.

If we are concerned about safety, some areas of the school will become out of bounds and pupils will remain in the school building. Pupils will be expected to wear school uniform but it is strongly recommended that they wear suitable outer clothing for travelling to and from school.

If the school is to close

In the event that the school is deemed unsafe to open, the Headteacher has the authority to close the school. Therefore, on days where a local amber ('be prepared') or red ('take action') weather warning is issued which could prevent the school from opening, the Headteacher will make an informed decision based on information from the site manager and local members of staff as to whether it is necessary to close.

1. The closure will be reported on the school web site no later than 8am;
2. The closure will be reported to the Aquinas Trust;
3. Parents will be alerted to the closure using the schools' email communication service and text messaging service.

If severe weather affects the school during the day

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep families informed as to the ongoing situation during severe weather conditions. We appreciate such conditions can create a degree of uncertainty and in turn challenges for families however parents are expected to check the website when it is clear that closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during severe weather children may arrive later than normal. Parents should endeavour to contact the school to notify the office when children are delayed or on the way.

The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off even where the clear majority of children can get to school. In such instances, parents should inform the office of the particular circumstances in order to authorise the absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school will close without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of circumstances preventing the child coming into school, risk unauthorised absence.

When the school is formally closed, all pupils are registered with an authorised absence.

In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen severe weather, or other circumstances, parents will be contacted by using the schools' email communication service and text messaging service, and asked to collect their child. **Such an early release will only be contemplated in extreme circumstances.** In the event of delayed collection, the school will continue its duty of care and look after pupils and then by no less than two members of the leadership team.

Advice for Members of Staff

The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff members are treated fairly and consistently, and that health and safety requirements are met whilst maintaining a worthwhile education programme for pupils.

In the event of severe weather that could prevent opening, the head teacher will:

1. Establish if the school site is safe to open;
2. Ensure a notice is posted on the school website to inform staff, parents and students of opening times or closure;
3. Report the closure on the school website no later than 8am;
4. Instigate the severe weather policy.

Procedures for school remaining open (including late opening/early closure)

The school will remain open wherever possible.

We acknowledge that some staff members may experience difficulty in reporting for work during periods of severe weather and other exceptional conditions. That notwithstanding, difficulties with transport or travel caused by the location of an employee's home in relation to their place of work are primarily the responsibility of the employee, and it is the duty of all employees to make every effort to fulfil their contractual obligation to report for work and attend for their normal contracted hours.

Weather preventing travel to work/delaying travel to work

Local radio and weather forecasts should be used as guidance as to whether it is recommended as safe to travel.

Where a member of staff decides that it is not possible or feasible to report to work at all they must inform the office immediately by phone or by email admin@stnicholasceprimary.co.uk. The school should also be informed of any anticipated delays in arrival.

If the severe weather procedure is implemented, members of staff will be expected to report for work by **the informed time, which will be 30 minutes before notified registration time.**

If the weather deteriorates during the school day and it is likely to cause unsafe transport or travel home at the normal time, the Headteacher has the discretion to close the school early and staff members will be informed of arrangements.

If the school is to close

In the event of conditions so extreme that the school is deemed unsafe to open the Headteacher has the authority to close the school. The closure will be reported on the school web site as soon as it is established conditions are unsafe.

The Headteacher will notify the trust and chair of AAC of the school's closure.

Appendix 1:

Snow Procedures

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 collective worship.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on any snow or ice present on paths leading up to the school.

In icy conditions the **Caretaker/Site Manager** will salt pathways as follows:

- The pavement directly outside the main school entrance.
- From the cloakroom door and office door to all classrooms.
- From pathway to the rear door.

Essential pathways will be maintained as well as possible throughout the day.

On days where the school is closed to children, pathways will be maintained on a daily basis by the site manager so as to prevent build-up of ice and snow.

In the Headteacher's absence, the Deputy Head or in his absence a member of the leadership team will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Severe Weather Policy though will keep the Headteacher (or if unable to contact, the Chair of AAC) informed.

Using time at home

In the event that the school is closed, children are encouraged to use their time productively by reading home reading book, making weather inspired creations or accessing a website recommended by the teacher.

Appendix 2:

Wet Weather Procedures

In the event of wet weather, some pathways may become flooded or obstructed. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that travelling to, from and around school should be done thoughtfully in wet weather. Children will also be reminded of this in collective worship.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children conduct themselves appropriately in wet or flooded areas.

Pathways will be monitored as well as possible throughout the day. If any pathway becomes impassable then the families will be directed to the main entrance. On such days a 'common sense' approach to recording lateness in the register will be taken.

Colleagues will be available to help children into school and ensure an orderly start to the day.

During wet weather, wet play will consist of children remaining inside and having break in the school building, remaining in their appropriate floor.