



# **Adverse Weather Policy**

**Reviewed September 2016**

Adverse weather conditions can occur at any time, though usually with some advance warning. In response to adverse conditions we aim to ensure that the safety of all pupils and staff is paramount. Advance preparation, a robust risk assessment process and an effective communication system will contribute to the decision making process regarding school closure.

## **SCHOOL CONTEXT**

- The majority of our pupils are transported to school by ELB transport.
- Many of the ASD pupils can become anxious or distressed in unfamiliar circumstances such as delays or changes to routine.
- A number of pupils have serious medical conditions requiring regular medication.
- The school is located on a steep geographical gradient, within a residential area where approach roads can sometimes remain untreated.
- Although the school is located in Belfast a large number of staff reside outside the city and have to travel considerable distances to attend school.

**The decision to close the school will only be taken by the principal following the completion of a Risk Assessment.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

All parents, staff and allied health professionals are aware of methods of notification regarding operational status.

- 1. SCHOOL WEBSITE – [www.cedarlodeschool.co.uk](http://www.cedarlodeschool.co.uk)**
- 2. SCHOOL JOTTER MOBILE PHONE APP**
- 3. CEDAR LODGE TWITTER ACCOUNT**
- 4. LOCAL MEDIA – Radio Ulster 94.5FM / BBC NI**

The Communication System is maintained by Mr C Murphy (VP).

## **STAFF**

It is the responsibility of individual staff members to check the school status before leaving home. Regular checks should be made for updates.

Any staff member experiencing difficulty travelling to school should contact the Vice Principals directly on their mobile phones. If unable to make contact staff should ring the school number immediately as notification of non attendance will contribute to the assessment of overall staffing levels.

## **PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents attempting to bring pupils to school when ELB transport is unavailable should ensure they can make arrangements to safely transport them home again at the end of the school day. On arrival at school they should speak to a member of staff before leaving to ensure the school is remaining open.

If pupils are due to take public examinations on a day affected by adverse weather school staff will contact parents directly.

## **PREPARATION**

A **CONTACT REGISTER** will be retained in the School Office. This will include:-

- Class lists
- Transport lists
- Staff mobile phone numbers
- Local media contacts
- BELB On Call Officer
- BELB/SEELB/NEELB Transport Dept phone numbers
- Department of Education contacts
- Meteorological Services
- Rivers Agency
- PSNI
- NI Fire and Rescue Service
- NI Direct

The **BUILDING SUPERVISOR** will ensure:-

- Heating, lighting and water services are regularly maintained
- Adequate supplies of salt are maintained and mechanical spreaders are functioning
- Safety Signs, warning cones and Hazard Warning Tapes are in stock
- Mops, buckets and wet trip mats are available close to access points into the school building

The **SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM** will ensure:-

- The Action Plan is reviewed annually
- Contact details are regularly updated
- Relevant medical needs of new pupils are included in the risk assessment

| <b>ADVERSE WEATHER<br/>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>   |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  |  | <b>DATE.</b>   |   |
| <b>OPENING THE SCHOOL</b>  |  |  |   |
|  | <b>HAZARD</b>  | <b>RISK</b>  | <b>CONTROLS</b>   |
| Main entrance into school grounds.   | Key holders not on site<br>Entrance gate locked.<br>Driveway, car park and pathways untreated. | Pupils and staff unable to gain access to the school building.                                   | Staff Communication system.<br>Building supervisor/principal.   |
| Staffing.  | Limited number of staff available.<br>Health Care Staff or<br>School Meals staff unavailable.  | Unsafe staffing levels.<br>Provision of support services impaired.                               | Principal/ SLT<br>Assessment.   |
| Travel to school.  | Dangerous road conditions – local area and main roads.   | Pupils on ELB transport waiting at pick-up points.   | Communication channels with transport centre and drivers.<br>Pupils instructed to return home if transport delayed. |
| Pupils with serious medical needs on transport.  | Pupils needing to access medication due to delay in travel.                                    | Deterioration of pupils' medical conditions.   | Individual pupil's Emergency Travel Plans available on transport and copy retained in Main Office.                  |
| ASD pupils on transport.   | ASD pupils anxious and distressed by change in routine.  | Pupils presenting challenging behaviour on transport.  | Individual pupils identified to transport staff.<br>Social stories in primary dept.<br>Transport Guide.             |
| <b>KEEPING THE SCHOOL OPEN</b>   |  |  |   |
|  | <b>HAZARD</b>  | <b>RISK</b>  | <b>CONTROLS</b>   |
| Maintenance of school premises   | Disrupted electricity supply.<br>Potential burst pipes.  | Heating affected.<br>Lack of or reduced toilet facilities.<br>Provision of school meals affected | Building supervisor / SLT /<br>School Meals Supervisor monitoring.  |
| Access within school.  | Pathways and outside areas in dangerous condition.   | Injury to staff or pupils.   | Use of outside areas during break or lunch restricted or prohibited.  |
| School activities  | Use of off site activities.  | Closure of off site facilities –<br>Swimming Pool<br>Colleges<br>Other schools.                  | During adverse weather conditions these activities will be cancelled.   |
| <b>CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL DAY</b>   |  |  |   |
| <p>Due to the unpredictable nature of adverse weather conditions a decision to close the school may have to be taken after the school has opened.</p> <p>In this event pupil safety will be paramount in the arrangements for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Medical provision</li> <li>• Parent contact</li> </ul> |  |  |   |

