

Newbold Church School

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY (VERSION 1)



Review: K Marsh March 2018

Approved: GB

Signed: Chair of Governors _____

Signed: Headteacher _____

Next Review: September 2019

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1. Introduction

It is the aim of Newbold Church School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Newbold Church School intends to, wherever possible, make the decision to close the school before the teaching day commences, rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- Make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- Advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

1. School policies and procedures

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy

2. Decision to close

The decision to close the school will be made by the headteacher.

The Caretaker and the chair of governors will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher will assume the responsibility of the headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- a) Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site.
- b) Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to be operated safely.

In the event of school closure:

- The headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message and Facebook page.
- The headteacher will call the local radio station (Peak FM). It is noted that parents will have previously been made aware that announcements concerning the school will be broadcasted via the local radio station.

- The headteacher will inform the Academy Trust, by text or email message to the Academy Hub Lead or CEO/Deputy CEO, as soon as they are able to do so (following the completion of above actions).

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message, Facebook Page, Email and / or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

3. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only.

The Caretaker will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.

All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted.

At the headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.

All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

4. Health and safety

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The school will be liable if it is found that the school has been negligent in its responsibilities and has not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds.

Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the headteacher or Caretaker so the safety can be reassessed.

Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.

5. Limited staff numbers

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, whether this means they will be late or not.

Staff members are expected to assess the availability of all public transport and consider the feasibility of walking to work, if they live relatively close and are fit and able to do so, in order to attend work.

The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk.

It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

Staff members are required to consider local weather conditions, distance, availability of public transport, and fitness to walk when making their decision.

Staff members are required to liaise with the headteacher to discuss options of attending work.

In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff:

- a) No maximum class size limits are set out.
- b) A limit of 30 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

6. Attendance statistics

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.

When a pupil cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the headteacher believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed, without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevent the child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

7. Exam disruption

If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

The school takes full responsibility for informing parents and pupils of any agreed changes concerning exams in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

8. Emergency plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure.

Newbold Church School's emergency plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parent contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move pupils to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort children.
- Contact parents.
- Deal with any media interest.

Each member of staff will have a copy of the emergency plan.

9. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.