

Severe Weather Policy and Procedure

Bushbury School



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1. Rationale

Our primary duty is to educate students in a safe environment. Extreme weather conditions may lead to a conflict between our duty to educate and our concern for safety. This document sets out the procedure for such conditions and sets out the actions that Bushbury School need to take in the event of severe weather.

2. Closure Decisions

Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances. The decision to close a school in severe weather, or when responding to a public emergency, should be taken by the Head Teacher of Bushbury School based on the following:

- Local conditions
- This Guidance
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- An Assessment of Risk
- Information from the Local Authority

When we experience severe adverse weather conditions, it is always very difficult to determine how this will affect travel and site safety, particularly when we have snow and ice. When deciding to close a school, there are a number of issues that have to be considered:

- Many students are reliant on public taxis; therefore, schools need to be sure that the taxis will run and that journeys are safe.
- Some staff live some way from school, some a considerable distance away. Schools therefore must be confident that there will be sufficient staff able to get in, in order to teach the students as school has a duty to ensure a safe level of supervision.
- The condition of the site - is it safe for students and staff to move around the school? Clearing paths and gritting takes a long time. It is a difficult decision to make, and parents/carers will appreciate the dilemma between giving everyone sufficient notice of closure and trying to guess what the road and weather conditions will be between 8.00 and 8.30am.

If possible, a decision will be made by 7.30am, at the latest, on the day of the adverse conditions. It is possible that a decision will be taken to open the school but with a delayed starting time. Our decision will be regularly updated, and parents/carers informed as soon as practicable. In addition, the office will send out a message via Arbor.

3. During the school day

- Once a decision has been made to open the school, we will endeavour to remain open for the duration of the school day. If the weather becomes severe during the day, then parents/carers, and transport providers, should contact the school if they feel that they would like to collect their child early for safety reasons (i.e. travelling or walking long distances or collecting other children from other local schools).

- If the school decides to send pupils home early, then the school has a duty to notify all parents to ensure that there is an adult at home to receive their child. No child will be sent home early on transport if this has not been substantiated.
- The schools will endeavour to remain open until 2.30 pm. If parents/carers and transport providers anticipate being delayed due to adverse weather conditions, please leave in good time to collect your child. If they are delayed, they should contact the school to give an estimated time of arrival.
- In such circumstances, parents/carers and transport providers must consider their own safety, traffic congestion and the safety of others.

4. Staffing

Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the Police recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys, this is considered to include travel to work and school.

Staff will always make every reasonable effort to undertake the journey to school. It is appreciated that the journey may take longer than normal and therefore some staff may not be able to arrive before the normal start of the school day.

It may be necessary to ask all children to bring packed lunches if the kitchen staff are unable to reach school safely. Parents will be notified by Arbor/website if this is the case.

Where it is deemed too unsafe or difficult for staff to attend their workplace, other options should be considered. For example, working from home.

Staff must always contact the Head Teacher of Bushbury School or their line manager to discuss their situation and consider options. For example, working from home or coming in later.

5. Preparation for Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather, the premises manager will make sure that the heating is left on during 'out of hours' periods for frost protection purposes.

The Head Teacher of Bushbury School will brief staff in advance to ensure they know what is expected of them.

The Head Teacher of Bushbury School will frequently brief parents, children etc. in advance to ensure they understand where they can get up to date information from, e.g. Arbor, school website or local radio stations.

Where schools are open, risk assessments must be undertaken by the Premises Manager and reported to the Head of Operations at Horizon and Head Teacher of Bushbury School to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils, and all site users. Inspections of paths and walkways should be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local

arrangements for clearing and salting when ice or snow appears, as well as any failures to the surfaces.

Where gales or high wind warnings have been issued, the site should be checked for dead or damaged branches/trees and other potential hazards to people or property.

Where it is not possible for some staff and/or children to return home, the Head Teacher of Bushbury School will ensure there are plans in place to provide warmth and hot refreshments.

6. Responding to Severe Weather

The Head Teacher of Bushbury School will keep a regular check on the forecast for severe weather conditions. The Head Teacher of Bushbury School should ensure there is an up-to-date list of home contact/mobile phone details provided by Pupil Admin for parent contact details, and HR Admin for staff contact details.

The Head Teacher of Bushbury School/Office Staff will use all means possible to inform parents and staff that the school will be closed:

- The Head Teacher will make regular communication with relevant parties to reflect the current situation.
- Office staff will update the message on the school answer machine to reflect the school's situation.
- Office staff will send out a message via Arbor.
- The School Emergency Response Team (SERT) will have contact numbers for staff and parents and others to hand and will use a cascade system where possible.
- Where possible a message will be posted on the main entrance or gate and in the case of schools, ensure someone is there to meet any children/parents etc. who may turn up.

School will keep a copy of these procedures with their copy of the Schools Emergency Evacuation Plan.

7. Re-opening of Schools Following Closure

If the school has to be closed for several days, the Head Teacher of Bushbury School will make the decision as to when it is safe to re-open the school.

When the severe weather has passed, establishments should check their premises before announcing that it will re-open. The Premises Manger, Caretaker and/or Head Teacher of Bushbury School should inspect the premises for signs of damage, e.g. heating failure, flooding, burst pipes or damaged trees.

School sites that have experienced damage serious enough to warrant declaring a Critical Incident should follow the guidance in the School Emergency Evacuation Plan and use the relevant contact numbers to report it.

The Head Teacher of Bushbury School should use the schools Arbor system for advising staff of the situation and send an updated message to the Local Authorities.

8. Review

The Severe Weather Policy should be reviewed by the Head Teacher of Bushbury School every two years and/or after any severe weather incidents, to ensure that procedures are appropriately implemented and are effective at safeguarding pupils, parents, and staff against severe weather.