

Adverse Weather Policy



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement:

To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us

DOCUMENT STATUS

<u>Drafted:</u>	<u>Implemented:</u>	<u>Last review:</u>	<u>Next review:</u>
March 2021	March 2021	March 2021	September 2021

Statement of intent

It is the aim of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School to ensure that school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

St Vincent's Catholic Primary 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/carers of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

1. School policies and procedures

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

- Health and Safety Policy
- Snow and Ice Risk Assessment
- First Aid Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents/carers and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether pupils should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment.
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of rock salt.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

2.2. The Maintenance Officer is responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the Head Teacher of any damages.

2.3. Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Head Teacher.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.

2.4. Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

3. Decision to close

3.1. The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teacher.

3.2. The Maintenance Officer and the Chair of Governors will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

3.3. In the absence of the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher will assume the responsibility of the Head Teacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

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

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site.
 - Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely.
- 3.5. In the event of school closure:
- The Head Teacher will inform staff and parents/carers via text message / email.
 - The Head Teacher, Business Manager or Admin Assistant will post an update on the school website and Twitter.
 - The Maintenance Officer will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.
 - The Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority who will publish a list of school closures on the Warrington Borough Council website.
- 3.6. In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents/carers will be contacted via text message, email or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school.
- 3.7. A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.
- 3.8. In the event of school closure, staff will provide remote learning as soon as practically possible using, but not limited to, the following platforms / resources:
- Reception Class: Tapestry
 - Years 1 – 6: Microsoft Teams, Spelling Shed, Maths Shed

4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

- 4.1. When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. The Maintenance Officer will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.
- 4.4. All pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises, following the procedures in section 5.
- 4.5. At the Head Teacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents/carers.
- 4.6. All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

5. Procedures for gritting

- 5.1. The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by pupils and staff. This includes the main entrance of the school, as well as the following areas:
- Path into school from staff parking
 - Paths into classrooms from the main gates

- 5.2. The second phase of gritting will include areas that are not covered by phase one, but are likely to be used. These include, but are not limited to, the following areas:
 - Playground areas
 - Public pathways outside of school premises
- 5.3. The Head Teacher decides which areas of the school are designated 'first phase' and 'second phase' for gritting.
- 5.4. The site manager ensures that the correct areas have been gritted and are safe for pupils and staff.
- 5.5. Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted are clearly marked or cordoned off, so that pupils do not enter them.
- 5.6. The Maintenance Officer ensures that the relevant equipment is used during gritting. Any damaged equipment is reported to the Head Teacher so that it can be replaced.
- 5.7. The supply of rock salt / grit is monitored – if supplies are low, the Head Teacher is notified.

6. Health and safety

- 6.1. The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.
- 6.2. The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents/carers entering the school site.
- 6.3. The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.
- 6.4. Staff, visitors and parents/carers have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds.
- 6.5. Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.
- 6.6. If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the Head Teacher or Maintenance Officer so the safety can be reassessed.
- 6.7. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the Maintenance Officer will assess the school site and inform the Head Teacher at 7.00am of the state of site.
- 6.8. A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.
- 6.9. Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.
- 6.10. When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.

7. Limited staff numbers

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk.
- 7.3. Staff members are required to liaise with the Head Teacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.
- 7.4. 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:
 - No maximum class size limits are set out.
 - 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.
- 7.5. The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

8. Attendance statistics

- 8.1. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. If the Head Teacher 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.
- 8.4. Parents/carers 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.

9. Exam disruption

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. The school takes full responsibility for informing parents/carers 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.

10. Critical incident plan

- 10.1. In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the First Aid Policy.
- 10.2. St Vincent's Catholic Primary School's critical incident plan will contain:
 - Information on where to find parent contact details and how to make contact.
 - Procedures for contacting staff for out-of-hours emergencies.
 - Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.
- 10.3. 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/carers.
 - Deal with any media interest.
- 10.4. Paper copies of the plan will be kept at nominated staff members' homes in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

11. Monitoring and review

- 11.1. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.
- 11.2. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher.