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## ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS POLICY

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Updated: September 2014

It is the policy of our school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible. 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. If during adverse weather there are insufficient numbers of staff able to reach school to keep pupils safe and their well-being needs met, the Headteacher, through a risk management process decides to close the school.
2. Conditions around the school site are deemed, through a risk management process, to be dangerous to pupils and staff and any visitors to the school
3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel and there is an anticipated risk to the well-being of pupils and staff remaining in school

If a decision is made by the Headteacher, or in his absence, a senior member of the school leadership team for the school is to close:

1. The decision will be conveyed as soon as is practically possible to the Chair of the school's governing body and to the appropriate officer of the Local Authority
2. The closure will be recorded on the Gateshead Council Website by the Head Teacher or senior member of the school's leadership team. This information is available to the public at [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)
3. Parents/carers will be advised of any closure by our text messaging service to prevent pupils arriving in school or to ensure that they are quickly and safely removed from the premises
4. The media (Metro Radio, Radio Newcastle and Capital Radio) will then be given details of the school closure to enable them to include the school in any closure announcements.

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However parents are expected to check Gateshead Council's website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority. Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an un-authorised absence.

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

In the event of the school having to close during the school day, due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted via the text messaging service and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

**In the event of snow, some, not all, 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 assembly. Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt wide pathways as follows:

- A) From the top gate at Carr Hill Road to the main school entrance;
- B) From the above (A) pathway, another pathway will branch off to the Reception class entrance;
- C) From the above pathway (A), another pathway will branch off to Nursery entrance;

The 'bottom' yard of our school will not be cleared and all children will enter school from the 'top' yard.

Where necessary, these essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

On school days where the school is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the caretaker, so as to keep them clear and prevent build-up of ice and snow.

During significant adverse weather conditions, the School Hall will be open from 8.45am to allow **CHILDREN ONLY** to shelter before school officially commences at 8.55am. Parents **SHOULD NOT** enter school as this will add to the congestion.

Parents are asked to dress their children in appropriate clothing and footwear when the weather is so severe. Wellies and outdoor boots can be removed in school and pupils can wear their school shoes as normal once inside the building.

In the Headteacher's absence the Deputy Headteacher will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to this Adverse Weather Policy.