



# SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE STATEMENT



## **Severe Weather Procedure Statement**

### **Contents**

1. Aims and Objectives	4
2. Management Plan and Procedures	4
3. Responsibilities	4
a. MAT Central Team	4
b. Site Team/Manager/Caretaker/Designated person	4
c. Headteacher	5
d. School Business Manager/Office Manager	5
e. All Staff	5
f. Parents/Carers/Visitors to Site	6
4. Clearance Procedures	6
5. Notification of Decision to Close	6
6. Monitoring and Review	6

## **1. Aims and Objectives**

This Severe Weather Procedure Statement has been created with the aim of ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed before, during and after severe weather conditions, for example snow and ice, high winds etc.

Rivers CofE School Trust (Rivers) aim to maintain safe access, egress and routes across all school sites school site as far as reasonably practicable within the resources available, however responsibility for safety in severe weather conditions lies with adult individuals (whether employees, parents or visitors). Our best endeavours should not be taken as an absolute guarantee of safety.

In the event of adverse weather conditions, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that our schools remain open as normal. During adverse weather conditions the partial closure of a school will always be considered before any decision to completely close is made.

The Headteacher (or Head of School) in each school will make the final decision as to whether a school will close. In the case of any closure or partial closure, parents/carers will be informed by text message, social media and the school website. We will also endeavour to communicate school closure by other means such as local radio.

Once the Headteacher has decided to open a school, all members of staff will be required to carry out their duties, as outlined within the policy.

## **2. Management Plan and Procedures**

The Severe Weather Procedure Statement will come into effect during periods of severe or adverse weather conditions, typically snow and ice, or when snow and ice has been forecast, however may include any other severe or adverse weather condition.

Due to the expanse of a school site, it is recognised that it is impossible for us to clear snow and ice from every footpath, playground, road or car park. We will prioritise key pedestrian routes of access/egress and endeavour to clear suitable pathways to main entrances. School playground and car parks may be cleared where suitable mechanical means are available. It remains the responsibility of all users to exercise their own initiative in ensuring their own and others safety during times of snow and ice or other severe weather conditions in the school grounds.

## **3. Responsibilities:**

### **a) MAT central team**

- Monitor the effectiveness of the procedures in minimizing the risks from severe weather conditions.
- Review and update statement when required.

### **b) Site Team/Manager/Caretaker/Designated person**

- Be responsible for ensuring any snow clearing equipment is in good repair, including any personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Ensure means of access, egress and designated routes across the school are safe for employees, pupils, parents/carers and visitors and that adequate arrangements are made to ensure that the risks from severe weather conditions are minimised.

- Agree a site map detailing the order of priority for clearing of snow and ice with the Headteacher and School Business/Office Manager.
- Monitor the weather forecast to support the site team in managing the risks from severe weather conditions.
- Proactively monitor current conditions and react to changing priorities e.g. communicating temporary closure of playgrounds or pathways.
- Ensure that the correct areas have been treated with rock salt and are safe prior to pupils/parents/carers/visitors arrival on the school premises.
- Update the Headteacher and School Business/Office Manager with regard to progress made and any issues.
- Ensure the relevant equipment is used.
- Ensure any damaged or broken equipment is promptly replaced, following the agreed procurement channels.
- Monitor the use of rock salt and ensure adequate stock levels are maintained.

### **Agreed procedures for gritting**

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:

- Hall door/ car park side. Walkways around school, pedestrian gates and fire exits
- External classroom entrances

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:

- Staff car park
- Any other walkway used by staff, children, or parents/visitors

### **C) Headteacher**

- Consider how snow and ice or other severe weather conditions may affect the operation of the school, e.g. transport difficulties and the availability of staff and services.
- Advise parents/carers and pupils of the risks during severe weather conditions e.g. the importance of suitable clothing and footwear.
- In circumstances when safe access, egress and safe routes cannot be achieved the Headteacher will either partially or fully close the site having liaised with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- In the event of closure/partial closure, the Headteacher will work with the support of their senior team to communicate this to all relevant parties by making use of the school's communication methods e.g. text message. There will also be communication issued to Worcestershire County Council and the local radio stations (through the agreed LA procedures)
- Decide the hours of work of the site team in adverse weather conditions.
- Delegate snow and ice clearing duties amongst other staff if appropriate and having agreed beforehand.
- Be responsible for deciding whether pupils are kept indoors during break times and share this decision with staff at the earliest opportunity.

### **d) Office Manager**

- Support the Headteacher in monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and report any concerns to the Business & Finance Director.
- Monitor the weather forecast to support the site team in managing the risks from severe weather conditions.

#### **e) All Staff**

- Should wear suitable clothing and footwear according to forecasted and actual weather conditions to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.
- Will use the nearest available cleared pathway to enter the building.
- Should be aware that when areas have had rock salt or other materials applied this does not guarantee that paths are completely safe or slip proof therefore should proceed with absolute care and attention.
- Must dry any internal wet areas – if it is not practical to do themselves, they should report to a member of staff who is available to do this. External icy patches should be coned off and reported to the Caretaker or the School Business Manager.
- Should communicate to pupils the need to wear appropriate footwear in snow, ice, rain or other adverse weather.
- If a member of staff feels the policy is not being implemented, they will raise their concerns with the Headteacher accordingly.
- All members of staff are responsible for the safety of pupils, other staff and themselves.

#### **f) Parents/Carers/Visitors to Site**

- Parents/carers/visitors will only use designated areas whilst on the school site.
- If the Headteacher decides for safety reasons that the school needs to close/partially close, parents/carers will be responsible for collecting their children.
- Parents/carers will ensure their contact information held by the school is kept up to date. Any changes should be reported immediately.
- Parents/carers should ensure children are wearing appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather conditions.
- During handover periods, parents/carers will ensure that pupils do not enter undesignated areas. They should ensure they do not use any play equipment during periods of adverse weather.

### **4. Clearance Guidance**

- Snow and ice clearing equipment should be checked by the site team/caretaker to ensure it is in good working order in advance of the winter season. Any broken or damaged equipment should be disposed of and promptly replaced.
- The site team, or other designated staff, will wear the PPE and equipment provided e.g. snow clearing equipment. All equipment should be visually inspected before use to ensure it is safe and in good working order.
- In order of priority, treat paths with rock salt or other suitable product to maintain safe access/egress and routes across the site. Rock salt can be applied to playgrounds but if the surface remains frozen and/or potentially dangerous then serious consideration should be given to coordinating off the area and ensuring breaks and lunches are taken indoors.
- Identify any particularly dangerous areas which require extra care and which should be checked/treated more frequently, for example slopes, hidden gullies etc.
- Routes should be regularly checked through the day to ensure freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred.

- Deep snow should be cleared prior to the application of rock salt to the cleared paths and/or playgrounds.
- In extreme, prolonged severe weather conditions, it may be necessary for the school to investigate snow clearance services which may be available from other Rivers schools.
- Rock salting and path clearance outside of the school premises is not the responsibility of the school. Staff should not make any attempt to clear snow or ice outside of the premises as this is the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council.

## **5. Notification of Decision to Close**

The school should report any decision to close to the Trust for information and to the Local Authority via the ChS portal.

## **6. Monitoring and Review**

The Severe Weather Procedure Statement will be reviewed as required, following a severe weather event.

Appendix 1

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing the CEO, parents 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.

The site manager 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 Headteacher/Head of School of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this plan.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Headteacher/Head of School.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.
- Liaising with one another before the end of the day to discuss an exit plan for pupils, this includes escorting younger pupils to the entrance to be collected by their parents.

Parents 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.

Suggested text to parents:

NWPA is closed today due to severe weather conditions. Site staff are working hard to make the site safe for children and staff to return tomorrow/as soon as possible. We will keep you informed through our school website and social media pages.