

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery



Adverse Weather Policy

November 2022

It is the aim of Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions where practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Where possible the decision to close or open the school will be made before the teaching day commences.

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.

School policies and procedures

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

- Health and Safety Policy
- Medical Needs Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Making the decision to close or open the school due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents/carers and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether children 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.

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 of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the headteacher.
- The safety of children, 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 children, this includes escorting younger children 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.

Decision to close

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

The site manager, chair of governors and Local Authority will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, Mrs Higham 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:

- 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.

In the event of school closure:

- The headteacher will inform staff and parents via Arbor.
- The headteacher or deputy headteacher will post an update on the school website.
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.
- The headteacher will call the local radio station. It is noted that parents will have previously been made aware that announcements concerning the school will be broadcasted via the local radio station.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents/carers will be contacted via Arbor 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.

Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

Risk assessments will be carried out in determining whether the school will remain open. If the school remains open following snowfall/ icy conditions, access to the site will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only.

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

All pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before children arrive on the premises, following the procedures in section 5.

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

Procedures for gritting

The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by children and staff. This includes the main entrance of the school, as well as the following areas:

- Paths leading to the school office
- Paths into school – EYFS/KS1 Entrance and KS2 entrance into classrooms

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:

- Playgrounds

Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted are clearly marked or cordoned off to prevent use.

The Site Manager ensures the relevant equipment is used during gritting. Any damaged equipment is reported to the headteacher so that it can be replaced.

The supply of rock salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the headteacher is notified.

A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting. This record is passed on to the headteacher.

Health and safety

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

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 children, staff, visitors and parents/carers 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/carers have 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 site manager so the safety can be reassessed.

In the event of adverse weather conditions, the site manager will assess the school site and inform the headteacher at 7.00am of the state of site.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

Closing the school is a reasonable decision if children 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.

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.

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 difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

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 children 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.

Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised. A 'Y' code will be used in the register, which is unable to attend due to unavoidable cause.

When a child cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, they will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence.

If the headteacher believes a child could have safely made it to school but did not attend they will be marked as having an unauthorised absence.

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 recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Test disruption

If the school has to close, or if a child misses a test 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 children of any agreed changes concerning tests in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

Monitoring and review

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.