



4 - 18 yrs Co-educational Independent Day School

## Severe Weather Procedure

**Approved by:** Dai Preston, Headteacher

**Date:** 01.09.22

**Last Reviewed:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

**Next Review Due:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024

## Introduction

Arnold Lodge School's priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils, staff, parents and carers. The school aims to maintain safe access across the school site as far as reasonably practical.

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the school remains open during severe weather and partial closure will always be considered before the decision is made to completely close the school.

On occasions adverse weather means that the school site is unsafe and poses a health and safety risk to the school community.

A decision to close the school will never be taken lightly. This would involve both the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Site Manager. The first consideration is always for the safety of pupils. In adverse weather conditions, where staff and pupils live some distance from school, the journey to school may be too hazardous for them to set out and, once at school, equally hazardous for them to get home.

## Planning ahead for severe weather

**Snow during the day** – If there is heavy snowfall during the day, consideration will be given to allow parents the option of collecting pupils early before conditions worsen. A decision will also be made whether school buses should depart from school earlier than usual.

**Snow overnight** – Heavy snow overnight will require early morning decision making, for which the Headteacher and staff will be prepared. In the event of unexpected overnight heavy snowfall then as far as possible the school will endeavour to decide by 6.30am as to whether to close the school. This will enable parents to be informed as soon as possible and avoid an unnecessary and potentially dangerous trip to school. It will also enable the school to determine whether the school buses will run and therefore avoid pupils travelling to their allocated bus stops.

In the event that the Headteacher makes a decision to close the school the following staff will be directly involved with advance measures: -

Headteacher – will notify staff by email.

Operations Manager – will direct the Operations Team to send an email message to all parents and update the school website.

Class Teachers – where able to do so upload home learning assignments via Show my homework and Class Dojo

## Notifying parents

The school will monitor weather reports and will keep parents informed of potential weather that may cause the school to close. This should provide suitable warning and awareness. If the weather is severe enough to warrant closing the school before the school day begins, we will notify parents by

1. Updating the school website and school parent portal
2. Updating social media (Twitter, Instagram & Facebook)
3. Sending an email to all parents & staff (as early in the morning as is practicable)
4. Where possible, using the school text message service to contact parents directly.

## Staff travelling to school

It is for individual staff to decide whether it is safe to travel in to school. Staff who cannot travel must notify the school as early as possible through the normal reporting procedure.

If there is only a skeleton staff available at school, staff who can get in will supervise pupils. Staff who cannot

safely get in to school and are able to do so will email work for pupils and update this throughout the day. All staff are aware of this procedure.

### **Snow and Icy conditions at school**

In accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act the school will ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, means of access and egress on the school site is maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to pupils, staff and visitors.

The school maintains a stock of salt, grit and snow shovels. In icy conditions the Headteacher will ensure that;

- A decision is taken as to whether outside play is safe and amend the daily routine accordingly.
- Parents are advised to ensure pupils wear suitable clothing (e.g. hats scarves and coats) and footwear.
- Pupils are advised of potential dangers and given guidance as to appropriate behaviour. This will include being made aware of water on floors from snow and ice.

### **Risk Assessment**

The school risk assessment covering hazards associated with snow and ice on the school site is in place and is updated annually. All staff are aware of the risk assessment and take responsibility for following the designated paths and access routes when severe weather conditions exist. Staff will follow the controls specified in the school risk assessment for the use of Playgrounds, Astroturf surface and outdoor play equipment during severe weather.

### **Snow and Ice Clearance**

The Headteacher is responsible for snow and ice clearance at the beginning of each day. The Site Manager is responsible for maintaining the salt and grit supply. The Site Manager will direct the site team to arrive at the school early to grit pathways and clear snow in accordance with the school gritting plan.

Gritting and clearance will concentrate on providing clear, gritted walkways around the school site and the car park from where the school minibuses depart and arrive. Immediate areas around fire exits will be cleared and, in the event of a significant snowfall fire doors will be checked to ensure that they can be fully opened and the access route leading from the door is clear.

If the Headteacher and Site Manager have concerns over the safety of certain external pathways, circulation routes, playgrounds etc., where appropriate the affected areas will be taken out of use. In this event the pathways will be marked clearly using signs/cones/tape to ensure everyone is made aware.

The Junior and Senior Playgrounds and the Astroturf surface will be gritted as much as is reasonably practical prior to pupils arriving on site. However, during periods of ice and snow pupils will not be permitted to play ball games or run on these areas prior to the start of the school day. Teachers on duty are responsible for ensuring that pupils do not run on these areas until any ice or snow has had sufficient time to thaw.

A decision will then be made by the Senior Leadership Team and Site Manager whether pupils can play on these areas during the course of the school day.

### **Deterioration of weather during a school day**

In the instance that weather conditions deteriorate during the school day and the decision is taken to close the school, we will notify parents by:

1. A phone call from the office asking parents/carers to pick their child up
2. Updating the school website and iSams parent portal
3. Updating social media (Twitter, Instagram & Facebook)

4. Sending an email to all parents/carers
5. Where possible, using our text message service to contact parents directly

### **Pupils travelling to school**

If travelling to school poses a concern from their location, parents should contact the school office on 01926 778050 and let the school know. Similarly, should parents consider that that travelling will become hazardous due to the weather during the school day, parents should contact the school office and arrange to collect their child early. In such circumstances, the safety of parents and pupils on their journey to and from school is paramount.

For those pupils who walk home at the end of the school day, if parents/carers request the school to release their child early to walk home the school will do so only if there is a parent or an identified adult expecting their arrival.

Consideration will be given to the age of the pupil, the severity of the weather conditions and the distance to be walked. If the weather conditions are severe parents will be asked to make arrangements to collect their child or from school.

### **Pupils leaving school due to early closure of school**

If parents are advised to collect their children due to the early closure of school and wish to make alternative arrangements for the collection of their children parents need to speak to school reception, or email school reception and inform them who will be collecting their child.

### **School buses**

In the event of a forecast of heavy overnight snow where it is reasonably possible, the school will endeavour to make a decision on the evening before whether school buses will operate the following morning. If it is deemed a risk to the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff for the school buses to operate as normal the Headteacher will inform parents.

In the event that the school remains open, but it is deemed unsafe for buses to travel to collect pupils parents will need to make alternative arrangements should they wish their child to attend school.

### **Linked Policies**

Health and Safety Policy