

Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School



Snow and Bad Weather Policy 2022 - 2025

Mission Statement

At our Parochial school we aim to provide a stimulating and caring environment in which every child flourishes, with Christianity at the heart of all we do. We encourage every child to be a light that shines, for themselves, for the community and for the world.

Aims

At Whickham Parochial we believe that every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood, celebrate their individuality and reach their full potential. We aim to do this through:

- Creating a caring school family living by Christian values.
- Celebrating everyone's strengths and efforts.
- Valuing the opportunities we have to contribute to our community and the wider world.
- Offering wide ranging quality experiences that stimulate children's minds.
- Encouraging respect for others, positive behaviour and good manners, enabling all children to feel secure and valued.
- Building strong links between school, home and church.
- Preparing children for future challenges in a changing world

We wish every child to take with them happy memories of Whickham Parochial into their future life.

This policy for snow and bad weather is based on a priority for ensuring the school site remains open yet safe at all times for staff and students throughout periods of inclement weather.

If however it is felt that the site should not be opened, staff and parents will be contacted via Text message informing them of the decision to close the school. The HeadTeacher will strive to make the decision as early as possible, taking into consideration difficulties that staff may face in getting into school and the weather forecast for the whole day.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher and SLT

- Outline in the school gritting plan (below), the prioritisation of routes to be gritted and appropriate access routes to use during bad weather. Ensure that employees (and where applicable others) are aware of which routes are gritted first so that they can plan their route into the premises accordingly.
- Carry out a review of these procedures (including this policy, risk assessment and gritting plan) in the first half of the autumn term to ensure their continued relevance.
- Liaise with the Site Manager/ Caretaker to confirm expectations of this policy.
- Ensure in lieu of Caretaker absence, that alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure continuity of service.
- Ensure that equipment provided to clear snow and ice is adequate for the purpose and maintained in a satisfactory condition. Adequate stocks of rock salt and sand/grit must be in place, monitored throughout the winter period and replenished promptly.
- Ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is available as necessary.
- Ensure that an appropriate method of applying rock salt and sand/grit mix is used and provide training as necessary. Manual handling should be assessed and reduced to a minimum. Wheel barrows or sand and rock spreaders may be used for this. Use of buckets should be avoided; they can be used only for small areas over a short duration.
- Ensure that paths are regularly checked throughout the day to ensure re-freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred and that areas are re-cleared and gritted as necessary.
- Make decisions regarding closure and safety (See School Closure, below).

Site Manager/ Caretaker

- The immediate clearance of snow and ice in designated areas in line with the school gritting plan
- Temporarily close access areas around the school in line with the school gritting plan. Such areas should be clearly marked (e.g. signage or tape). Records of clearance and access route closures should be kept.

Staff

- Report to the Site Manager/Headteacher any situation where the recommended action contained within the gritting plan has not been carried out.
- Safeguard their own and colleagues' health and safety in bad weather.
- Make reasonable, safe attempts to attend school if travel conditions permit.
- Contact the head teacher without delay if the travel conditions in their locality do not permit safe travel.
- Wear footwear/clothing appropriate to the conditions
- Adhere to the designated gritted pathways into and around school

Parents/ Carers

- Adhere to the designated, gritted pathways into school
- Supervise their child(ren) before and after school and ensuring that children do not play on play equipment outside of the school day
- Ensure that their child(ren) are wearing sensible footwear and warm coats according to the conditions
- Collect their child during the day should conditions worsen (if requested by the school).
- Listen for lists of school closures on local radio
<http://www.metroradio.co.uk/page/school-closures/>
- Check E-schools notifications and parent WhatsApp groups
- Check the list of school closures on the Gateshead County Council Website
[http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Education%20and%20Learning/Schools/School Closures.aspx](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Education%20and%20Learning/Schools/School%20Closures.aspx)

School Gritting Plan

Gritting is to be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the temperatures are around 1°C or below freezing. The best times are early in evening before the frost settles and/or early in the morning before employees arrive. Salt doesn't work instantly; it needs sufficient time to dissolve into the moisture on the floor.

Efforts will be made to ensure gritting does not take place during heavy rain as the salt will be washed away causing a problem if the rain then turns to snow. Compacted snow, which turns to ice, is difficult to treat effectively with grit.

'Dawn frost' can occur on dry surfaces, when early morning dews form and freeze on impact with cold surfaces. It can be difficult to predict when or where this condition will occur therefore staff and others are reminded to take extra care.

Actions to be taken immediately prior to adverse weather	Responsibility
Checking weather forecasts on a daily basis during winter months. (Note: email alerts can be received by registering on the Met Office website www.metoffice.gov.uk)	Head Teacher
Ensuring any particular equipment e.g. snow shovels are easily accessible for when bad weather hits	Site Manager
Checking sufficient salt supplies are in place and their locations are known	Site Manager
Identifying and agreeing times when gritting will need to be done	Site Manager

Actions to be taken during times of snow/ ice	Responsibility
Ensuring barriers/ signage/ instructions are provided to ensure access is restricted to the following high risk areas of the school. Divert parents and children to less slippery walkways and barrier off existing ones.	Site Manager
Although paths outside the school are outside the school's area of responsibility – if they are dangerous the Highways department should be alerted to the situation	Site Manager
Regularly checking paths throughout the day to ensure re-freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred. If it has areas will be re-cleared and gritted as necessary.	Site Manager

The following areas of the school grounds have been classed as priority areas for gritting: Gritting will take place during *Both early morning and early evening*

Areas to be gritted – Identify the outdoor areas used by pedestrians most likely to be affected by ice and either ensure they are gritted or take them out of use.

Priority access routes: Route from car park(s) to school entrance, route from main gate to main entrance/reception, pupil entrance and paths

Other priorities for gritting: Deliveries area and route from delivery area to deliveries entrance.

Special attention to be given to: building entrances, especially where tiled, ramps, sloped areas, areas constantly in the shade or wet.

Equipment used to remove snow/ice and to apply rock salt or sand/grit (e.g. snow shovel, snow clearer, sand/grit & rock/salt spreader, etc.)

School Closure

Every effort will be made to open school for staff and pupils. However, there may be circumstances in which the site is unsafe due to insufficient staff to meet our safe ratios. If this is the case, we will endeavour to open as soon as possible during the school day.

If travel conditions continue to impede staff throughout the day, it may be possible that we would need to close.

If it is felt that the site should not be opened, staff and parents will be contacted via Text message informing them of the decision to close the school. The HeadTeacher will strive to make the decision as early as possible, taking into consideration difficulties that staff may face in getting into school and the weather forecast for the whole day.

If the school does open, but extreme weather develops during the day, we will aim to remain open until the end of the normal school day at 3.20 pm. However this is not always possible when roads are becoming treacherous. In this case, parents will be contacted via E-Schools and asked to collect their child/children as soon as possible. Under these conditions we will take verbal permission for their child/children to be collected by a nominated adult, but no child will be permitted to walk home alone before 3:20pm - after which time the normal home time arrangements would apply.

Normal lessons may be curtailed and the remaining pupils assembled in groups under the supervision of authorised members of staff to await collection.

Staff will always make every reasonable effort to undertake the journey to school. It is appreciated that the journey may take longer than normal and therefore some staff may not be able to arrive before the normal start of the school day. It may also be necessary to ask all children to bring packed lunches if the kitchen staff are unable to reach school safely.

Further information can be found within the Gateshead Intranet Document [EDU-HS-14 Unavoidable School Closures](#).