

Guidance For Inclement Weather



Date reviewed	08/03/2021	L. Cotton
Next review due	Autumn 2021	

Watermill School Governors have adopted this guidance in Dec 2010, it is based on the guidance from the City Council (Dec 2010)

Statement of Intent:

Ultimately, it is the Governing Body which is answerable for the actions taken by the Headteacher and it is, therefore, important that we have a robust process in place so that parents and staff, as well as the general public and the LA, understand why and when our school has to close.

Watermill School Governors believe this policy needs to be executed in a controlled and principled fashion, that the standards expected of the school are maintained,

the operational procedures are in place in order to ensure the safety of our pupils and other stakeholders and retain the ethos of the school.

Purpose

To create a robust, equitable and clear policy with regard to the schools operations during periods of severe weather.

This will ensure a safe, orderly and professional approach to operations during periods of inclement weather that maintain the smooth running of the school and does not jeopardise the safety of our pupils or any other stakeholders.

Scope

To operate in times of inclement or severe weather, most especially but not restricted to conditions of snow and ice or other circumstances that may limit or impact on staff and pupils ability to attend school in the usual fashion.

GUIDANCE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

All staff need to be aware of the process to be followed if the school is to be closed due to extreme weather conditions or other emergencies.

- (a) When Watermill School has to close for an unexpected reason, that decision is made by the Headteacher or, in his/her absence, a designated member of the senior staff(Appendix 1) the following need to be informed:
 - (i) the Chair of Governors;
 - (ii) the LA by telephoning the Director's Office on 236100; and (iii) if appropriate, to inform parents via BBC Radio Stoke on 208008.
 - (iv) any affected staff or contractors' staff (including catering and cleaning staff).
 - (v) Designated Staff to inform parents, taxis and other staff. (see appendix i)
 - (vi) Designated staff to check school Diary and make any necessary cancellations amendments.

In the case (iii), the caller will need to give the school's DfS number and, in the case of Radio Stoke, a code word (schools should contact the Director's Office on 236100 if they are unaware of the code word).

- (b) The decision to close a school is the responsibility of the Headteacher or a designated member of staff. The prime concern is the well-being and safety of pupils and staff.
- (c) When the school is in session and affected by poor weather conditions, the key question is whether pupils would be safer leaving early. Consideration must be

given to the age of the pupils and, for younger pupils, whether parents will be at home. For pupils who can walk between school and home, it is perhaps safer to close at the normal time but to leave the responsibility with the parent to collect their own child earlier, if they wish to do so. For pupils using public transport or a school bus, then advice should be sought from the company and, if pupils are to be released earlier, parents need to be informed by our admin staff.

- (d) When, because of weather conditions, the question arises about closing the school rather than normal opening, the following procedure should be in place:
- (i) the decision is made, on site, by the Headteacher or a designated senior member of staff. Consideration should be based on the condition of the site and the surrounding area and the supervision of pupils when on site. In order to assess the latter, each school should establish a procedure whereby staff can inform the Headteacher of any difficulties in getting to work on time;
 - (ii) if the Headteacher decides to close the school, the people designated in (a) should be informed. It should be made clear to parents that schools will be open unless it states the opposite on the radio. (There will be less difficulty in communicating with Radio Stoke, if schools do not try to announce that they will be open);
 - (iii) **It is the assumption of the School Governors & City Council that its employees will make every effort report for work.**
 - (iv) **It is the responsibility of the staff to communicate to school if they are unable to attend – unauthorised absence is classed as misconduct.**
 - (v) **Some employees, however, have chosen to live some distance from their place of work and that can cause them difficulties. It remains the view of the School Governors and the City Council that employees should not expect to be paid when they do not work because, by choice, they live where they do.**

The guidance for school staff under the control of Governors remains as follows:

- **Schools Remaining Open** – staff failing to report for duty should not be paid.
- **Schools are Closed to Pupils only** – staff failing to report for duty should not be paid. Staff who reported for duty but undertook reduced duties should be paid as normal.
- **Schools are Closed** – where staff were informed that they would not be required to attend for duty they should be paid as usual.
- **Casual Employees** – it is suggested that, where casual employees arrived or departed early due to the inclement weather, they should be permitted to make up the hours lost at a later date in order to minimise loss of pay.

(e) Safety of the Site

Gritting policy is in place to minimise the dangers of slipping on frost, snow and ice in outside areas and on access routes. Pedestrian walkways should be clearly marked to encourage visitors, parents and pupils to walk on these "safer" areas. Janitor / Caretaker need to keep abreast of the latest weather forecasts.

Supporting Policies

Attendance
Disciplinary
Gritting Policy

Appendix 1)

Designated Staff

In the absence of the Head Teacher a member of the SMT.

Janitor / Caretaker: - to liaise with Head Teacher (SMT Member) with regard to conditions on the ground.

SBM / Admin Staff: - to confirm with Head Teacher (SMT Member) on school closure – if closed then SBM / Admin Staff to cancel taxis, pupils who travel independently, other staff and the school diary.

SBM to advise: -
the Chair of Governors; the LA by telephoning the Director's Office on 236100; and if appropriate, to inform parents via BBC Radio Stoke on 208008.