



HERITAGE HOUSE SCHOOL

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Approved by:

Date: [February 2025]

Last reviewed on: [February 2025]

Next review due by: [February 2026]

Statement of intent

It is the aim of Heritage House School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing this can be done in a safe manner.

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 of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Department of Health and Social care, NHS England and UK Health Securing Agency (2022) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UK Health Security Agency and NHS England (2022) 'Heatwave Plan for England'

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather
- Informing parents and staff of any closure
- Deciding whether learners should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity
- Ensuring that staff know the precautions and model good practice

The School Business Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of grit salt
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis
- Ensuring staff have received appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy, and ensuring staff act in accordance with this policy
- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting
- Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy

The site team are responsible for:

- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the School Business Manager of any damages
- Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements in this policy
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the School Business Manager
- The safety of learners, colleagues and themselves

- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather
- Model good practice

Parents are responsible for:

- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close
- Ensuring they and their children wear appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather

School closures

On the rare occasion, especially during the colder months, we may have to make the decision to close the school due to poor weather conditions and dangerous road conditions leading to health and safety issues for our learners – this can also include, but is not limited to electricity faults and boiler breakdown. This is never a decision that is made lightly and is only concluded as a last resort after consulting the weather forecast, local authority and transport services that bring our learners to school each day.

As our school site is based high in the Chiltern Hills, we must consider how quickly the weather can change and what impact it can have on the roads, the school, our learners and their families.

The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher. The Chair of Governors will also be consulted when making decisions about school closure. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and School Business Manager will assume the responsibility 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.

Communication with parents, transport providers and the local authority

The decision to close the school is made as soon as possible and every effort is made to do so prior to 7.30am. When the decision is made, the local authority is notified and the information is posted on the Buckinghamshire Council website (<https://closures.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/check-if-your-school-is-closed/>). Once we have submitted this information on-line this will automatically notify local radio stations, officers within the Local Authority, Communication Team and Passenger Transport if necessary, and will be posted on the council's website for the benefit of parents and staff. This is by far the most effective way of ensuring that details of the closure are circulated quickly. We will also text parents as soon as possible, as well as update our social media channels.

Occasionally, we may have to close schools during the day to ensure learners get home before weather becomes severe. In such cases arrangements will be made via Passenger Transport services and Parents/Carers. Parents will be contacted via text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list and will be asked to collect their child from school as soon as possible. If learners leave school early via local authority transport, parents will be contacted to ensure someone is at home to receive them.

Emergency contacts

Please ensure that the school is kept up to date with your phone number, as well as emergency contacts.

Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, pathways will have been cleared and gritted before learners arrive on the premises.

The site team ensures that the relevant equipment is used during gritting and any damaged equipment is reported to the School Business Manager so that it can be replaced and the supply of grit salt is monitored. A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting. This record is passed on to the School Business Manager.

It may be necessary during periods of adverse weather conditions to restrict access to outdoor areas for safety reasons. If required, this decision will be made by the Headteacher.

Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorized.

When a learner cannot attend school due to adverse weather conditions, the learners will be marked in the register as having an authorized absence. It is at the discretion of the family as to whether the learner/s is/are able to attend school in adverse weather conditions.

Learner absences must be reported to the school reception by phone 01494 771 445 or email office@heritagehouse.bucks.sch.uk

Parents 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 registered as an unauthorized absence.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are required to contact the school office to discuss any difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimize personal risk. It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

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.