
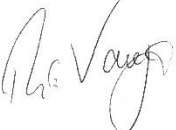




Lumen Learning Trust

Learning together for a brighter future

Emergency Closure & Adverse Weather Policy

DATE APPROVED BY LUMEN LEARNING TRUST	12 th March 2024		
REVIEW DATE Biennial	12 th March 2026		
SIGNED EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL	Mary Ellen McCarthy 	DATE	12/03/2024
SIGNED CHAIR OF DIRECTORS	Ray Vango 	DATE	12/03/2024

Lumen Learning Trust puts the children's needs at the heart of its provision. Our whole school community is committed to enabling the children to become successful lifelong learners and happy, fulfilled adults who can make positive choices about their future.

Introduction

It is the aim of name of school to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that 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 etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- KHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Adverse Weather and Health Plan'
- DfE (2023) 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Emergency Plan

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 pupils 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 classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy.

The Trust Estates Manager and school Caretaker 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.
- The Trust Estates Manager will coordinate a school's closure, providing direction to the school's Caretaker.

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 pupils, 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 pupils.
- Modelling good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Encouraging pupils to stay appropriately hydrated.

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.
- Following their School's Uniform Policy
- Ensure the school website and Facebook feed is accessible on their device/s.
- Visiting the Surrey County Council website which will list school closures in the county <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning> and clicking on Schools More → School Closures

Pupils are responsible for:

- Following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.

School closure

The school will make a local assessment and initiate all appropriate procedures in response to an alert. Alerts will be reviewed to ensure the school fully understands the potential impacts and how likely they are to occur.

The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher or Executive Principal. In the absence of the Headteacher, the deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to this policy.

The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply.

- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely.
- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site.
- Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous to travel.

In the event of school closure:

- The Headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message and email.
- The school will post an update on the school website and Facebook timeline.
- The school will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message and email, using the telephone number and email address provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Where the school is temporarily closed due to adverse weather, the Headteacher will aim to ensure the school can provide remote education.

Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration with the Headteacher. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of pupils.

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

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, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only and all pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

The caretaker will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site, if there are any, and a notice will be erected to inform vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds that they do so at their own risk.

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

All persons entering the school buildings will be asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

If a parent rings requesting they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher and may not be authorised.

Procedures for gritting

The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by pupils and staff. This includes the main entrance of the school and access points into the school used by staff and children.

The second phase of gritting will include areas that are not covered by phase one, but are likely to be used. These will be determined locally by the Headteacher and Caretaker.

The Headteacher will decide which areas of the school are designated 'first phase' and 'second phase' for gritting. Points of higher risk of injury in the event of snow and ice will be identified by the Caretaker, such as entrances, exits and playground areas, and prioritised for clearance or gritting.

The Caretaker will ensure that the identified areas have been gritted and are safe for use. Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted will be clearly marked or cordoned off to prevent staff, pupils and visitors from entering.

The supply of grit is monitored to ensure that there is a sufficient amount to clear ice and snow if these occur – if supplies are low, the Headteacher and Estates Manager are notified. The Caretaker will also ensure that there are adequate supplies of equipment, e.g. shovels and gloves, to support gritting and clearance of key routes through the premises. Any damaged or defective equipment will be reported to the Estates Manager to be replaced.

A record will be made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting.

In the event of an emergency incident during the school day

Parents may not always be notified immediately when an emergency protocol is initiated. Should the level of danger be deemed high a notification with instructions will be sent to parents using the school text and email notification system. Further updates will also be posted on the school website and social media account/s if deemed appropriate by the Headteacher.

Parents and carers can be assured that the school will maintain communication channels to ensure informed and accurate messages are transmitted depending on the level of danger. All channels available to staff at the time will be utilised which could include text, email, website, Facebook and school app.

In the event of an emergency incident parents and carers are asked *not* to call the school in question for updates as this blocks vital communication channels for school staff and may add to the level of danger or risk already in place.

If a parent requests they pick their child up early due to a mistaken, inaccurate, fake or malicious report of an emergency situation at the school via media and social media channels, and no emergency protocol has been deemed necessary by the Headteacher, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher and may not be authorised.

Exceptional Circumstances

The School recognises that there may be cases where families are "cut off" due to particular difficulties in the area in which they live.

In such cases parents should advise the Headteacher of their particular circumstances so that the school

attendance officer can justify to the Local Authority why the absence should be authorised.

Health and safety

The school will recognise its duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds. Staff members must take responsibility for the health and safety of any pupils under their supervision.

The Caretaker will conduct a site assessment in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the Headteacher will be informed of the outcome at 7.30am at the latest.

Closing the school will be a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

To minimise the risk of ill health during adverse temperatures, the school will:

- Encourage staff and pupils to keep as much of their skin as possible covered up during the summer months and wearing appropriate clothing during the winter months.
- Encourage staff and pupils (via parents) to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) **15** with UVA protection on any part of the body that they cannot cover up during the Summer months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Reschedule work/outdoor lessons according to the outdoor temperature.
- Situate rest areas in the shade during hot temperatures.
- Encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.
- Encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during adverse cold weather, the school will:

- Ensure heating systems are maintained and in good working order, prioritising rooms being used where appropriate.
- Draught-proof windows, doors and other points of energy loss.
- Close rooms or buildings that are too cold to be used.
- Ventilate indoor spaces, especially where people gather, to help reduce the risk of infections spreading.
- Reinforce messaging around the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Encourage physical activity where appropriate to help keep pupils warm.
- Provide information to parents and pupils on important logistical changes, e.g. change of school entrances/exits, known road closures.
- Ensure pupils have a sufficient supply of hot meals and snacks.
- Signpost parents to key sources of support, e.g. heating and other energy efficiency measures, during cold weather periods.

Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence will be registered as authorised.

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

If the Headteacher believes a pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school is 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 unauthorised absence.

The school fully appreciates that in bad weather children may arrive later than usual and that any lateness will be marked as due to adverse weather in the class register.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the Headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

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

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 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

Emergency Plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the Emergency Plan.

The Emergency Plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parents' contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move pupils to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort children.
- Contact parents.
- Deal with any media interest.