

Keston CE Primary School

Policy Title: Severe Weather
LT Responsibility: Head Teacher
Review Body: Head Teacher
Date: September 2026
Review: September 2027

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of **Keston CE Primary 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.

1. 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
- Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and UK Health Security 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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid, Drugs and Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Uniform and Appearance Policy

2. 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 the school has an adequate supply of rock salt.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- 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 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.

The site manager is responsible for:

- 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.

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.
- 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.
- Ensuring their children do not slide on any snow or ice present in the playground.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Following the School Uniform Policy.
- Following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.
- Attending school prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Following the Behaviour Policy at all times.

3. School closure

The decision to close the school will be made by the headteacher and the site manager. The Trust will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the headteacher, a senior member of staff will assume the responsibility of the headteacher in relation to the Severe 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
- Conditions are considered to be, or anticipated to become, too hazardous for travel.
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- The headteacher will inform staff and parents using the schools' email communication and text messaging service.
- The closure will be reported on the school website by 8am;

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted using the schools' email communication and text messaging service or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

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.

4. 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 all pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

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

In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on any snow or ice present in the playground.

In icy conditions the site manager will salt pathways as follows:

- Clear the snow/ice from the path (usually with a shovel)
- Sprinkle rock salt along the path

Essential pathways will be maintained as well as possible throughout the day.

On days where the school is closed to children, pathways will be maintained on a daily basis by the site manager so as to prevent build-up of ice and snow.

5. Health and safety

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The headteacher is 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.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the appropriate risk assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the headteacher or site manager so the site can be reassessed.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the site manager in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the headteacher will be informed of the outcome at **7.00am**.

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

The school is committed to ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of pupils. 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 to use sunscreen 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.
- Parasols will be available in the playground for breaks and lunchtime and children will be encouraged to find a shady area to sit in and drink plenty of water to remain hydrated during hot temperatures.
- Encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.
- Encourage staff and pupils to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

Relevant staff members will be made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions.

6. Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is 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 and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the headteacher believes the 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 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 unauthorised absence.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are 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 understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It is therefore 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.

The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

7. Clothing

In the event of extreme hot weather, parents will be asked to ensure that their child brings a hat and water bottle to school and they apply sun cream to their child before coming into school.

Parasols will be available in the playground for breaks and lunchtime and children will be encouraged to find a shady area to sit in and drink plenty of water to remain hydrated.

During the Winter months, pupils are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

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8. 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 by the headteacher.

The next review date for this policy is **September 2027**.