The Ellesmere Port
C of E College



Adverse Weather Policy

Policy Information:

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Review Date	Autumn 2027

Approved by Head of School

Mr S Murphy

Approved by Chair of Governors:

Mr G Derby

Frank Field
Education Trust

OUR VISION

To act justly, to love with mercy and to walk humbly with our God - Micah 6:8

At Ellesmere Port Church of England College we seek to build a community of faith where our students have the cultural capital to follow unlimited ideas and dreams. Above all else, we want our students to experience the fullness of life, where the sort of person they become is of paramount importance.

To **BE MORE** is to be a community which aspires to act justly in all situations; to be kind towards those inside and outside the College; and to be open to God's guidance in all areas of our lives.

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Introduction

It is the policy of the Trust for The Ellesmere Port Church of England College (EPC) to make every effort to remain open whenever possible. The decision to close a school, either before or during the school day, will be made by the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School after consultation with the FFET CEO. The school will only be temporarily closed if there is a risk of injury or inaccessibility and one or more of the following conditions apply:

- insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
- conditions on site are dangerous, or health and safety cannot be maintained.
- conditions are considered to be, or are anticipated to later become, too hazardous for travel.

Alternatives to closing

If some staff can't get to work, schools should consider flexible alternatives to the normal school day, for example:

- bringing together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together.
- using other school staff or volunteers to provide cover supervision or oversee alternative activities.
- re-arranging the curriculum.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff are expected to attend work at school, even if the school is closed to children, as long as it is safe for them to make their way there. Their work in school will be agreed by the senior leadership team.

Where adverse weather conditions cause staff delays, or difficulties in travelling to work, they should take all reasonable steps to make their way to school as soon as they possibly can, taking into account their personal safety.

If staff are unable to get into work, they should telephone school at the earliest possible opportunity to explain the situation and agree what to do. Staff should continue to communicate with the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School or line manager throughout the closure to establish the most appropriate working arrangement.

If staff are unable to travel to work, it is expected that they will work from home. Teachers should use the time for planning, preparation, recording and assessment, reading and researching articles to develop their practice. Support staff should complete work as directed by their line manager or the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School.

Procedure in the event of closure

If a school is to close:

1. the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School must notify the FFET Central Team as soon as possible to update the school website, social media and the telephone system.
2. the closure must be notified to the relevant local authority by the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School;
3. parents, carers and staff must be notified using Synergy as soon as possible;

4. the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School and senior leadership team will use the school Adverse Weather Plan (Appendix 1) to notify all stakeholders. It should be noted that cleaning and catering suppliers must be notified immediately;
5. the school will make all practicable efforts by way of the above to keep parents informed of the situation regarding school closure during adverse weather conditions, as the Trust appreciates that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. Where possible parents will be contacted via Synergy to alert them to the possibility of closure and parents will then be encouraged to check the school website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts for updates.

Weather deterioration during the day

In the event of a school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by via Synergy and asked to collect their child. Such an early release will only be contemplated in extreme circumstances.

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 by the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School after consultation with the individual. The Executive Head Teacher/Head of School will ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of the children.

School attendance statistics

The Trust appreciates that, during bad weather, children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if they are likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances, parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

Where pupils are unable to get to school due to severe weather conditions, their absence can be recorded using absence code ‘Y’ with appropriate number linked to this code, dependent on the circumstances. This means that their absence won’t affect the school’s attendance figures.

However, if a school believes that a pupil could have got to school, their absence should be recorded as unauthorised using code ‘O’.

Exam disruption

If the decision is taken to close a school, or if a pupil misses an exam due to an emergency, the school should discuss alternative arrangements with their awarding bodies.

Schools are responsible for making sure parents and pupils know what has been agreed, for example:

- using alternative venues.
- an exam result being generated by the awarding body, based on factors such as a child’s performance on other assessments in the same subject.
- the opportunity for children to sit any missed exam later in the year

On site safety

In the event of snow pathways will be cleared and salted. However, parents, pupils, staff and visitors should still remain cautious.

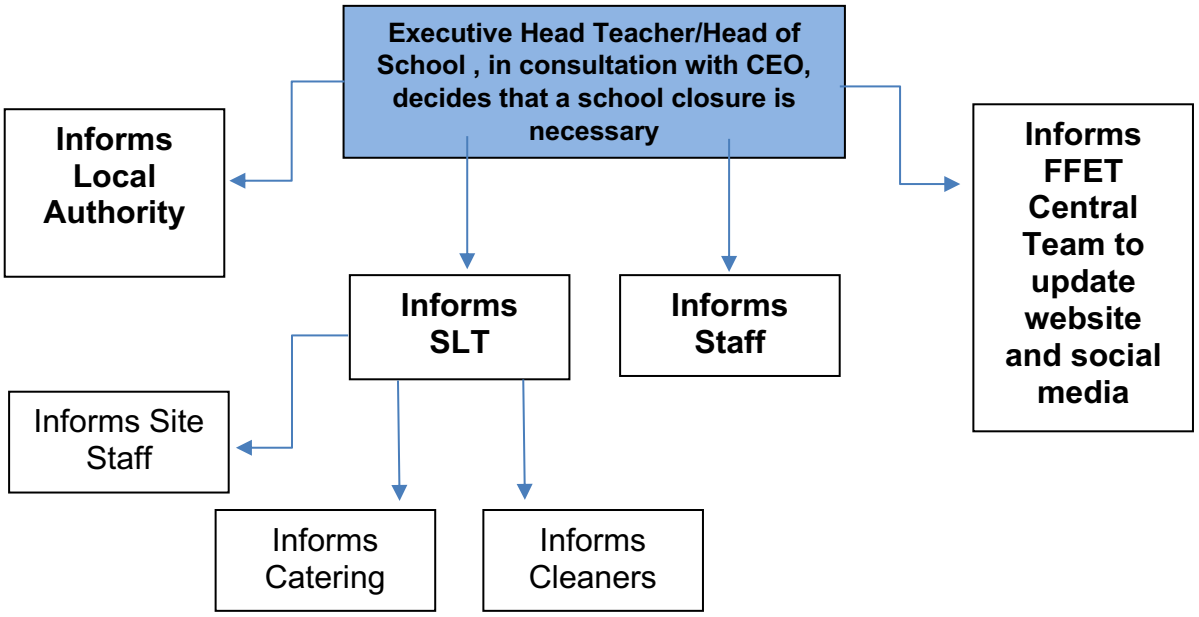
In icy conditions the site team will liaise with the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School to ensure site safety.

During adverse weather conditions, parts of the outdoor playgrounds may be restricted in use for pupils. This will be risk assessed by the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School and senior leadership team.

On school days where the school is closed to pupils but open to staff, essential pathways will still be maintained during snow and icy weather on a daily basis and the site team will endeavour to keep the pathways clear and prevent build-up of ice and snow as per the Winter Conditions Procedure (Appendix 2).

Appendix 1

Adverse Weather Plan



Office send Synergy broadcast to parents/carers:
'Due to adverse weather, school is closed today. Please check the school website for updates'

Office/IT to change telephone message:
'Due to adverse weather, the school is closed today. Please check the school website for updates'

Appendix 2

Winter Conditions Procedure – Site Staff

1. The site staff shall monitor weather forecasts each day during the months October to March.
2. On occasions where the forecast predicts overnight temperatures at or below two degrees centigrade, a discussion will take place on the need to grit or not, based on the likelihood of snow or ground frost.
3. Preventative gritting in advance should be undertaken the evening before the predicted severe weather.
4. If the ice or snow occurs during the school day, an immediate gritting will be undertaken in the order outlined below.
5. In the morning, should the balance of likelihood for the day ahead indicate ice or snow as a risk of 30% or more, or if snow or ice is lying on the ground already, the first site team member on site shall grit the exterior in the following order, assisted by the second team member upon their arrival.
6. Staff undertaking gritting shall have regard to their own safety when undertaking this and wear suitably gripped safety boots.
7. First a path from the student entrance to the Whitby Road and carpark gates/bike sheds plus the first area of the car park, including the car park turn-in and the slope to the barriers.
8. Secondly a full gritting of the slope up to the front reception, starting with a pathway from both directions and then up the middle to the main door.
9. Thirdly the delivery yard at the side of the building.
10. Fourthly, any additional external spaces required for pupils and visitors to enter the building.
11. Additional mopping of entrances to support the Cleaning Team during the day should be undertaken to ensure a reduced hazard of slips or falls as building users walk ice and water into the building on their footwear.