

CAVERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL



School Closure, Snow and Bad Weather information

October 2023

(Next review date: October 2025)

CLOSURE

The school has an early dismissal procedure in place that requires only custodial parents or other designated individuals to check pupils out of school.

The school regularly updates parent/guardian contact details. These are held on a computer database and parents will be contacted via email should a school closure be required.

If an individual, group of pupils, or the whole school needs to be sent home during normal school hours the school:

- Only releases pupils to custodial parent/guardian or person pre-designated by parent/guardian as an authorised contact.
- Keeps a log that includes the name of the pupil, the name of the person collecting the pupil, and the date, time and purpose for collection.
- Persons picking up pupils should present positive proof of their identity to office staff.

- Make a record of all the children who have walked home on their own
- All school staff should be instructed on the early dismissal policy and the policy should be consistently enforced.
- The location of all children should be known at all times.

Announcing School Closure or Partial Closure

Once a decision is taken to close, the school would contact parents via text message and email. We would also contact the 3 local radio stations below, initially by phone with a follow up email if possible, with information for broadcasters about school closure or partial closure on each day of closure, there is no need to call them to announce re-opening on subsequent days. The ticker on the school website will also be updated to communicate to parents regarding school closure.

BBC Radio Berkshire	0118 946 4200	berkshire.admin@bbc.co.uk
Heart	0118 928 8800 / 0845 2702456	thamesvalley.snow@heart.co.uk
Reading 107fm	0118 945 0808	news@reading107fm.com

School will also confirm the closure to Children's Services by email to:-

School.closure@reading.gov.uk

We will also let other agencies know of school closure, e.g. school transport, catering and cleaning contractors, road crossing patrols, mid-day supervisors, After School Clubs, lettings etc.

Obviously the school will try to give parents as much notice as possible.

SEVERE WEATHER PLAN

As a fundamental principle every effort must be made to keep the school open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend.

The Legal Perspective

There is a legal requirement to keep schools open for children to attend for 190 days per year (380 sessions), but they may close "unavoidably" if certain conditions apply, which usually means health and safety reasons.

The decision to close or restrict attendance will be taken by the Headteacher of the school, or in their absence by the most senior member of the teaching staff available, in consultation with the governors. The local authority will support Headteachers and governing bodies using this guidance to decide to close schools.

Risk Assessment

Any closure of the school is a most unusual occurrence and each closure is unique, making forward planning complex.

The Headteacher will undertake a risk assessment and decide if there is significant risk of severe injury, ill health or inability to comply with relevant legislation, which would then lead to their decision to close part or all of the school.

A range of factors needs to be considered such as:

- Whether there are on-site hazardous conditions that cannot reasonably be mitigated (for example the pathway to the school entrance or where pupils have to move around the site during the school day).
- Will there be enough staff to supervise (but not necessarily teach) the number of children likely to be present?
- Can a reasonable temperature be maintained in the building or parts of the building where children and staff are likely to be?
- Is water available and are sufficient toilets working satisfactorily?
- What are the general safety conditions around the site and building?
- What is the information on road conditions from RBC and Road Agencies e.g. AA/RAC?
- What is the amount of snow and ice accumulated?
- What is the temperature and wind chill. Some pupils walk to school and some must wait outside for the bus.
- What are the weather predictions?

If health and safety conditions are satisfied, then the school should remain open. During each day Headteachers will probably want to review whether or not the school should be closed early in the afternoon to enable pupils and staff to travel home in safety, or before the light fails.

When considering early closure the Headteacher will regard the health and welfare of pupils as paramount. All arrangements will ensure a standard of care for each and every pupil as would be expected of a prudent parent. Arrangements will take account of age, ability and capacities (physical and mental) of the pupils concerned; the location of the school in relation to pupils' homes and to road traffic and other hazards; the home circumstances of the pupils and any other emergency arrangements.

Arrangements will always be made for the security of children and parental assent must be sought if sending them home.

Action to be taken

Upon receipt of a severe weather warning from the LA or on their own initiative the Headteacher will consider the following possible actions:

- Circulate the warning or situation to key staff including teachers
- Monitor the weather conditions as they deteriorate
- Alert the Site Controller to review heating settings and to make arrangements for frost protection and the gritting of roads and footpaths on site
- Decide to close the school in advance where this seems sensible

Obviously the school will try to give parents as much notice as possible.

Staffing

The school cannot direct a member of staff to drive in conditions they consider to be dangerous, but they should be able to demonstrate that they have considered all other travel options.

In order to ensure that the school is prepared for the winter months, at the beginning of the autumn term the school will ensure that it has assessed its stocks of salt grit and sand.

To prepare for opening when there are severe weather conditions, the Headteacher will take the following action:

Ensure salt/sand stocks are plentiful and boilers are fully serviced.

- Check weather forecasts regularly via news and websites. Designated member of staff could do a regular check on <http://uk.weather.com> or <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

- Ensure staff travel distance is mapped and plan is in place for designating staff who can get in by walking/short drive (five miles) / long drive (10 miles) / very long drive (10 miles +).
- If possible, arrange for staff to accommodate each other locally in severe conditions if return home is impossible. Arrange for your accommodation if you are not local, should it be possible - local hotel arrangement may need to be made.

Clearance of Snow

Within the school site, the school is responsible for snow clearance and the clearing of approach paths is the specific task of the caretaker. When severe weather is forecast, the caretaker should be tasked to lay salt and grit in advance.

The clearance of public roads will depend on the availability of the Highways Department vehicles or contractors who will not normally be able to clear snow on school sites.

The Headteacher will be aware that they have a responsibility in inclement weather to keep the children indoors if there is any question of children's safety being at risk, for instance if they are let out at break time and the playground area is unsafe.