



Brookland Junior and Infant and Nursery Schools Adverse Weather Policy

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of Brookland Junior and Infant and Nursery Schools to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Brookland Junior and Infant and Nursery Schools intends to, wherever possible, make the decision to close the school before the teaching day commences, rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school.

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. School policies and procedures

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

Health and Safety Policy
Snow and Ice Risk Assessment
Critical Incident Plan

2. Decision to close

The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teachers of both schools in consultation with the site manager and Chair of Governors.

In the absence of one or other of the Head Teachers, the Deputy Head Teachers will assume the responsibility of the Head Teacher 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.
- Emergency access to the site is jeopardised.
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to be operated effectively.

In the event of school closure:

- The Head Teachers will ask the school administrator/ business manager to inform staff, parents, visitors, contractors etc. via text message and email at the earliest practical opportunity and to post a closure message on the school website.
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates and ensure that those accessing the site are informed of this.
- The Head Teachers will inform the local authority of the decision to close.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message and email in the first incident, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school. Emergency contact numbers will be called where children remain uncollected.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

3. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment and risks relating to individual pupils or staff members, eg those with a disability will be considered.

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 cleared pathways and pedestrian gates only. The access route across the field may be closed.

The site manager will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.

All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted.

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

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

4. 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 that the school has been negligent in its responsibilities and has 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 Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the schools' 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.

Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision, including parents or other adults bringing children to and from school and ensure that their children remain on cleared paths only when on the premises.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the Head Teachers or site manager so the safety can be reassessed.

In the event of adverse weather conditions, the site manager will assess the school site and inform the Head Teachers at the earliest opportunity once it is light and by 7.00am at the latest of the state of site.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

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

When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.

5. Limited staff numbers

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, whether this means they will be late or not.

Staff members are expected to assess the availability of all public transport and consider the feasibility of walking to work, if they live relatively close and are fit and able to do so, in order to attend work.

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.

Staff members are required to consider local weather conditions, distance, availability of public transport, and fitness to walk when making their decision.

Staff members are required to liaise with the relevant Head Teacher, or deputy in their absence to discuss options of attending work.

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 in that school year.

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

6. Attendance statistics

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

The local authority advises that where a school is open in adverse weather register close may be extended to 10am and pupils living over a mile from school and unable to travel to school may be marked as code Y ie not deemed absent for attendance statistics.

If the head teacher 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.

7. Emergency/ Critical Incident Plan

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

Brookland Infant and Nursery and Junior Schools' Critical Incident Plans will include:

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

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.

All staff will have read the Critical Incident Plans as part of annual staff training and induction for new staff.

Copies of the plan will be kept at nominated staff members' homes in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

All parents will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, e.g. their duty to collect children.

8. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Head Teachers, governors and staff and any necessary amendments will be made.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Head Teachers in consultation with governors and staff.