

Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School



Adverse Weather Policy

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School 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.
- To make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- To advise and inform staff and parents/carers of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equalities policy

Decision to close

- 1.1. The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher.
- 1.2. The Site Manager and the Chair of Governors will be consulted when making decision about school closure.
- 1.3. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Heads will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.
- 1.4. 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
 - Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to be operated safely.
- 1.5. In the event of school closure:
 - The Headteacher will inform staff and parents/carers via Arbor. The Headteacher will post an update on the school website and Facebook Page.
 - The SBM will call the local radio stations. It is noted that parents/carers will have previously been made aware that announcements concerning the school will be broadcasted via the local radio stations.
- 1.6. In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents/carers will be contacted via Arbor or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school.
- 1.7. 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

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The Site Manager will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.
- 2.3. All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted.
- 2.4. A notice will be erected to inform that vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds do so at their own risk.
- 2.5. At the Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents/carers.
- 2.6. All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

Health and safety

- 3.1. Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.
- 3.2. Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery 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/carers entering the school site.
- 3.3. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's health and safety policies and procedures.
- 3.4. Staff, visitors and parents/carers 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.
 - If anyone believes that the site is unsafe, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds.
- 3.5. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the Site Manager will assess the school site and inform the Headteacher at 7.00am of the state of site.
- 3.6. A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.
- 3.7. Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.
- 3.8. When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.

Limited staff numbers

- 4.1. During periods of adverse weather conditions, the school will be flexible with teaching when subject to reduced staff numbers.
- 4.2. 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.
 - However, 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.
- 4.3. The school will continue to strive to provide high quality education in the given circumstances.

Attendance statistics

- 5.1. Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. Parents/carers 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.

Exam disruption

- 6.1. If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.
- 6.2. The school takes full responsibility for informing parents/carers and pupils of any agreed changes concerning an examination in adverse weather conditions.

This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

Emergency plan

- 7.1. In the case of an emergency, the school will follow the procedure in accordance with the First Aid Policy.
- 7.2. All nominated staff will be trained to:
 - Contact and liaise with emergency services.
 - Provide first aid.
 - Move children to a safe place.
 - Calm and comfort children.
 - Contact parents/carers.
 - Deal with any media interest.
- 7.3. All parents/carers will be contacted via Arbor or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school, informing them of their responsibilities, e.g. their duty to collect children.

Monitoring and review

- 8.1. The effectiveness of the Adverse Weather Policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

- 8.2. The Adverse Weather Policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.