



Heronbridge School

Policy: Snow and Ice Protocol

Coordinators: J Evans

As a Rights Respecting School, we are committed to embedding the principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This policy enables our pupils to access and enjoy the following articles of the convention.

Article 1- Every child under the age of 18 has all the rights in the convention.

Article 2 -All children have these rights

Article 3- The best interest of the child should be the main priority in all things that affect children.

Article 28- All children have the right to an education

Article 29- Education should teach children to respect the natural environment

Adopted 12/3/2014

Last review 02/2023

Next review 02/2024

Overview

This plan covers the contingencies made for a snowfall or a deep freeze which may result in enforced school closure or restricted opening.

This plan aims to prevent:

- The stranding of pupils and staff
- Unnecessary risks travelling to and from school through good communication
- Excessive impact on children's education by alternative means of support
- Accidents in the school through good risk assessment.

Policy

It is policy that school will open on all normal school days even when some poor road conditions exist. However, in the event of a heavy snowfall, we cannot guarantee that staff will be able to attend school and a decision to close or restrict school opening may have to be made.

At these times, Bridgend County Borough Council sends severe weather warning updates to head-teachers.

If the school is closed, a member of staff (where possible) will be available at school to ensure that messages and communication are maintained for the first few hours of closure. Thereafter the school will be empty.

If there is an enforced school closure, we cannot look after children. However, those already transported to school prior to a decision being made will of course be looked after until they can be collected.

Residential Pupils

A decision to close the residential houses will be made by the Head of Care as early as possible, to ensure that pupils can be safely transported to their homes.

Decision

If the weather conditions are severe enough to force closure or restricted opening, this decision will be communicated to parents in a number of ways:

- Bridgend CBC website www.bridgend.gov.uk/schoolsclosures
- Via the school website <http://heronsbridge.co.uk/>
- Text messaging service
- Local radio www.bridge.fm/

The decision to close the school will be made by 7:30am by the Headteacher. Once the decision has been made the Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors.

In the event of rapidly changing conditions (eg. A snowfall that was not forecast or heavy snow falling as pupils are arriving at school) a decision will be made in response to these conditions.

As snowfall can vary according to location, there may be occasions when the first manager on site is not a senior manager. On these occasions, the manager has the authority to advise the Headteacher on the conditions on site and on the actual risks of keeping the school open.

If the conditions have changed and a decision to close has been made after initially opening the school, class staff are responsible for contacting the families of their pupils to ensure that there is someone at home to receive them.

Restricted opening - where school is open but some staff and pupils may be unable to attend due to weather conditions:

Taxis/parents are asked to exercise extreme caution when dropping off or collecting children by car/minibus because of the gradients and potential compacted snow and ice.

If a taxi drops off a pupil at a dangerous point, staff are to refuse to accept the pupil and redirect the taxi to the safe drop-off zone.

The rear of the school may be inaccessible, if this is the case, the entrance to the rear of the school will be restricted by cones and all taxis/minibuses should drop off/pick up at the main entrance. (this will obviously cause a delay due to congestion and we would like to thank drivers for their patience at these times).

At the end of the day, the children should be collected as usual but there will be no after-school clubs or staff meetings. Parents who wish to collect their children early due to the road conditions may do so.

On such days, children's access to the playground and movements around the school grounds will be restricted.

Parents are reminded to ensure their children have warm clothes and suitable footwear in case their journey is disrupted or they are stranded.

Communications

As above, once a decision is made. The school phone is likely to be very busy and it may not be possible to get through so we would ask parents to use the means of communication outlined above instead.

THEREFORE PLEASE DO NOT PHONE THE SCHOOL TO ASK IF WE ARE OPEN.

Q&A - snowy days when school is open

Will I be contacted in the event of snow?

There will be communication via the methods outlined above. However, school will not contact parents individually as a matter of course.

Do I need to contact school?

If you decide not to travel or send your child to school because of the road conditions, please let us know so that we know the children are safe.

Should I travel to school or not?

Always check the BCBC website first. Parents/taxis and staff have to decide whether it is safe for them to make the journey to school (if your journey is too risky you should abandon it and inform the school). Where possible, the school will try to ensure that there is someone at school to greet the pupils but if you arrive at school and no member of staff is present your children must remain your responsibility and should not be left unattended at school.

Will there be after-school clubs?

No. Please keep the office informed if you are delayed on your way to collect the children. As always, we will look after the pupils until you get there.

When should I collect my child?

Parents/taxis who decide to bring their children to school are welcome to collect their child early on grounds of safety.

(taxis should contact their manager/school/parents first)

Impact on education

On days when the school has restricted opening, children may not be taught by their usual teachers or in their usual classes, as we may not have our full quota of staff. However, we will ensure that we have an educationally valid day which will include English and Maths at an appropriate level. For those pupils at home, there will be a range of snow day activities/resources in the pupil area of our website:

<https://heronsbridge.co.uk/activities-resources/>

Support if stranded in school

A member of staff will stay in school until all children have been collected.

Food - the school kitchen holds a small stock of food throughout the term which can be used to ensure a snack for anyone stranded.

Heat - as the system is gas-fired, this should not be affected. In the event of breakdown and the necessity to close the school, communication will be through the means outlined above.

Internal safety measures/checks by Caretaker and Grounds staff.

Entrance/exits, routes around school grounds and fire escapes - are to be cleared and salted as a priority. (Non-maintenance staff are not to be expected - or directed - to clear snow or shovel grit/salt, although we accept and appreciate that some staff are prepared and willing to help, they do so at their own risk).

The initial two areas to be made safe first should be:

1. The road from the bottom gate, along the front entrance of school and exit at the top gate.
2. The pathway from the bottom gate and directly outside the front entrance at the pick-up/drop off points.

Salting - the caretaker will ensure sufficient stock, salt is stored in the grit bins located at various points around the school grounds and a reserve supply is stored in the garages. Salting in and around the paths for access to the school will commence at 7am each day, as necessary and during the day if conditions require.

February 2023

To be reviewed annually (or after each incident of snow & ice)