

# **Bledlow Ridge School**



## **Severe Weather Policy**

**Date agreed: September 2024**

**Review date: September 2025**

This policy has been written inline with the following guidance: [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings](#).

We will endeavour to keep the school functioning normally wherever possible, but if bad weather makes access to Bledlow Ridge School impossible or unsafe, school closure may be considered. In the event of school closing:

- Buckinghamshire County Council Schools' web site will provide you with up-to-date information on school closures: <http://closures.buckscc.gov.uk/Default.aspx>
- A message will also be posted on Bledlow Ridge School's own website: <http://bledlow.eschools.co.uk/site>
- An email will be sent to all parents
- A message will be posted on the school's Twitter feed @bledlowridgesch

**The decision to close will be made by the headteacher in consultation with the chair of governors considering the following:**

- Health and safety – will remaining open constitute a significant risk to pupils and/or staff.
- Availability of staff – has the severe weather meant that a significant number of staff have been unable to attend making it impossible to open.

**Our first priority will always be to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff, parents and families.**

In the absence of the Headteacher decisions regarding opening and closure will be made by the Deputy Headteacher.

**1. In the Event of Heavy Snow or other adverse conditions (e.g strong wind) before the School Day Starts**

- Please check the homepage of the school website and emails, which will give you an indication of whether school is closed or whether the school opening hours are different - a decision will be made by 7.30am.
- If the school is open, please bring your child to school. Please check that staff have arrived at school before leaving your children on the premises.
- Older children who walk to school unaccompanied must be made to understand what to do if they find out, whilst on their way to school, that the school has been closed. These children must continue walking to school and once they arrive a member of staff will contact their parents to advise them of the situation. The unaccompanied children must not simply return home or take it upon themselves to go to a friend's house.
- If there have been heavy snowfalls and you live some distance from the school, you may decide not to send your children to school on that day. Please do not telephone the school if you decide to keep your children at home during bad weather, as we need the telephone free for emergencies and in order to phone out.
- Parents may always, at their own discretion, collect their children early from school on days when conditions deteriorate and travelling becomes hazardous. Please report to the school office first, before collecting children from class.
- It is appreciated that during bad weather children may arrive later than usual; the school recognises this and will record appropriately.
- It is also appreciated that alternative clothing (other than school uniform) may need to be worn and this is acceptable to the school on these occasions.

## **2. In the event of heavy snowfall (or other adverse weather conditions, e.g strong wind) during the school day**

- If there is heavy snowfall or other adverse weather conditions during the school day, the Head Teacher will decide whether it is necessary to close the school.
- The Office will contact parents via email and, if necessary telephone, and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible.
- The Staff that live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity.
- If possible, a skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected.
- If a parent rings requesting they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, the Head Teacher will decide how the absence will be recorded.
- There may also be exceptional occasions when, because of emergency conditions arising during the day, the school has to close. In this event we will contact all parents by email or telephone. Children will never be sent home from school before normal time, whatever the conditions, unless parents have been contacted first.
- If we are unable to contact parents, the children will be kept at school, unless it has been possible to make arrangements with the named emergency contact person agreed by you. It is therefore very important you keep us up to date with emergency contact details.
- At the end of the day a message will be posted on the website with details of the arrangements for the following day. An email will also be sent out.

## **3. In the event of extreme heat during the school day**

In the event of extremely hot weather, school staff will always follow the guidance given by the local authority, following an alert from the Met Office.

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies. School staff will always look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

If sensible precautions are taken, children are unlikely to be adversely affected by hot conditions.

These precautions include the following:

### **Protecting children in extreme heat**

- In the event that the school becomes too hot throughout the school day, parents will be notified via email and asked to collect their child.
- There may be changes to the school day, e.g. early finish, if the school is too hot for pupils and staff. This will be communicated on the website and via email.
- The school will follow the Met Office Guidance and Buckinghamshire County Council in the scenarios above

### **Protecting children outdoors**

During periods of high temperature, the following steps will be taken:

- Children will not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- Children will be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible when playing outdoors
- The length and timing of playtimes and lunchtimes may be rearranged to avoid children being in the sun during peak sunshine hours
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide their children with sunhats, preferably with wide brims to avoid sunburn

- Parents/carers will be asked to apply sunscreen to their child before coming to school to protect their skin
- Children will be encouraged to drink plenty of water, more than usual when conditions are hot.

#### **Protecting children indoors**

- During periods of high temperature, the following steps will be taken:
- Windows will be opened as early as possible in the morning before children arrive
- If the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors, windows will be almost closed
- This should help keep the heat out, while allowing adequate ventilation
- Use of electric lighting will be kept to a minimum
- All electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers will be switched off when not in use – staff will not leave equipment in ‘standby mode’ as this generates heat
- Where possible, staff will adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
- Oscillating mechanical fans will be used to increase air movement

For further information on reducing temperatures within school buildings and grounds see UK Health Security Agency’s (UKHSA) [Heatwave Plan for England](#).

#### **4. Absence**

- If school is closed, absences will not be considered unauthorised.
- In the absence of the Headteacher, the senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions related to this policy.

#### **5. Staff**

- If public transport is in operation, staff are expected to make every effort to attend.
- If it is impossible or unsafe for staff to attend school, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to contact a Senior Manager (in line with usual absence procedures).
- In the event of part-closure or deteriorating weather conditions, the Headteacher will dismiss staff based on travel time and/or weather conditions in the area where staff live.

Revised: September 2022