



Harlow Green Community Primary School

Adverse Weather Policy

Every child has the right to the best possible health (Article 24)

Every child has the right to a good quality education (Article 28)

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Schools should wherever possible stay open, even in severe weather. The importance of children being in a safe environment where they can be warm and have nutritional food as well as continue in their education is a priority.
- 1.2 Additionally, to support parents/carers who have to get to their places of work, having children in school and cared for is supportive of the whole of the community to function during the adverse weather (e.g. parents who work in key worker roles).

2. The Decision to Close

- 2.1 The decision whether to close is for Head Teachers to make as they know the school and the surrounding areas best. To make a decision to close, the Head Teacher will assess the health and safety risks for pupils attending school during severe weather conditions keeping the school open whenever it is safe to do so.
- 2.2 Severe weather may mean that school is unable to open as planned due to the effects the weather may have on the building (collapsed ceilings, burst pipes, no heating etc) or that there is a substantial number of staff who may be unable to reach the school due to disruption to the road network and public transport.

3. Informing Parents/Carers

- 3.1 Where the decision is made to that school is unable to open to pupils it is essential to minimise disruption by informing parents, providing as much notice as possible, using our online communication and website.

4. Staff During a Closure

- 4.1 If the School has had to close due to adverse weather, the assumption will be is that this has been done on Health & Safety grounds and, therefore, it would not be expected that staff or pupils would attend. However, all staff would be expected to be able to work from home in some capacity ensuring that they are paid as per their contract (see below).

5. Absence and lateness to work When School is Open

- 5.1 If it is decided to keep the school open but staff are late to school due to travel disruption or absent for all or half of the day, then the following considerations would apply as options:
- 5.2 Should staff contact school to say they have had difficulty travelling and have returned home, a there may be consideration of working from home to make up the hours lost from work that

day and the possibility of continued working from home should the weather not improve over night.

- 5.3 Staff who will be absent or delayed or who wish to leave work early because of worsening conditions should agree this with the Head Teacher. The safety of the staff will be paramount and always favoured in adverse conditions.
- 5.4 If staff do not wish to work from home or make up the time later then they are not entitled to be paid for periods when they do not fulfil their full contractual working hours. This would not be an unlawful deduction from wages, provided that pay is only withheld for the relevant period of absence.
- 5.5 However, before pay is withheld, HR Advice will be sought to ensure it does not become an unlawful deduction from wages. Employees will be informed that, should they be absent and not work the hours up at another time/place, any periods of absence or lateness will be unpaid. Decisions will be taken on a consistent and fair basis, to minimise the risk of claims of discrimination and/or constructive dismissal.
- 5.6 If staff are unable to attend school because their own children have not been able to attend their school this will be absence without pay as it falls within the parental leave regulations and it is unsuitable to allow them to work from home if they are actually having to look after their own children.

6. Keeping the Site Safe in Snow – Clearing and Gritting

- 6.1 In times of heavy or extreme snow, it is the aim of Equans (the Building Management) and the Governing Body, that the site is accessible but safe. In order to achieve this, there will be close planning and working together over time and in the immediacy of the situation.
- 6.2 To ensure that the school paths are safe to walk on and the car park is safe to drive on, Equans will monitor the weather on a regular basis and react accordingly with gritting. This will attempt to pre-empt the weather conditions.
- 6.3 During the periods of snow which falls throughout the day, there will be snow clearing which will involve Equans staff and, where possible, school staff.
- 6.4 It is not possible to clear the whole of the site in times of heavy snow and, therefore, a gritting plan identifying the priority areas is designed (see Appendix 1). The plan is focused on initially ensuring that people can enter and exit the building safely which may mean reducing the number of entry and exit points (through the front of the building). However, to ensure ease of collection at the end of the day, the aim will be to open all points where possible.

7. Review

- 7.1 The nature of adverse weather means that the policy will be reviewed dynamically and will be responsive to the situation.

Appendix 1: Gritting Plan



Priority 1

Priority 2

Priority 3