Bad Weather Policy

Ringmer Primary and Nursery School

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Approved by:	Headteacher	**Date:** 14/10/25
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Amendments		
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September 2023	2.2.8 deleted as it was a duplicate of 2.2.3	
September 2025	No changes	

Introduction

In the Event of Heavy Snow Before the School Day Starts
- Parents
- The School

Exceptional Circumstances

In the event of heavy snowfall during the school day

1. Introduction

1.1. In the event of disruption caused by heavy snow or adverse weather, the prime concern of the school must always be to ensure the safety of our pupils and staff. The decision to close the school will take account of the safety of all our pupils and staff, some of whom travel a great distance to school each day. We will always endeavour to open the school in the event of bad weather, as long as it is safe to do so.

1.2. The school will make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

1.3. The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teacher.

1.4. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1.4.1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.

1.4.2. Conditions on site are dangerous.

1.4.3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous to travel.

2. In the Event of Heavy Snow Before the School Day Starts

2.1. Parents

2.1.1. When school closure is a possibility parents should find out whether the school is open by:-

2.1.1.1. Checking their school emails, the ESCC Website to see if Ringmer Primary and Nursery School is in the list of the schools that are closed.

2.1.1.2. Listening to BBC Sussex.

2.1.2. If it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, parents should ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late.

2.1.3. If parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. (see point 3).

2.2. The School

2.2.1. The Caretaker will attend the site by 6.15am and inform the Head Teacher of the safety of the site by 6.40am.

2.2.2. The Head Teacher will decide whether the school will open taking into account the conditions at the school and the ability of staff to get there.

2.2.3. If the Head Teacher decides the school will close they will update the ESCC website accordingly and send a message to staff and parents advising them of the closure.

2.2.4. The Head Teacher will decide as early as possible whether the school can be opened. We have to look at a number of important factors including the feasibility of clearing a path to the school (snowy conditions); the general condition of the school e.g. checking for tree or roof damage (high winds/major storms); and whether the school's systems for heat, water and light are all operating. We also have to ascertain whether sufficient staff can make the journey into school so that we can stay open.

2.2.5. Possible decisions will range from full opening if all children can be managed and taught effectively for the school day; partial opening if some classes or year groups can be taught but others cannot; or full closure if the number of staff unable to attend is such that it is not viable to open the school at all. Please bear in mind that whilst local roads may be passable, members of staff have to travel from different locations and we need to ensure that our staff ratios are sufficient.

2.2.6. The fact that King's Academy Ringmer (KAR) might decide to close, will not mean that we necessarily take the same decision: each school has to make its own decision based on its own circumstances (for example KAR will have to consider whether school buses are running, whereas the vast majority of our families are able to walk to school).

2.2.7. We aim to make the decision promptly with a view to sending a message to parents and staff as close to 6.30am as possible and wherever possible we will do this by 7.00am.
If the Head Teacher decides the school will close they will update the ESCC website accordingly.

2.2.8. It is important for Parents to undertake the action at 2.1.1 above in case the message system is slow due to the number of schools trying to use it.

2.2.9. Harrison's Lane is a bus route and gritted so staff will be asked to park on the road or walk and it is assumed the majority of parents and pupils will walk. In snowy conditions the Car Park will be closed for safety as it it too large to clear and ice can form if snow becomes compacted.

2.2.10. If we can open the school in snowy weather, we will seek to clear a path from the main perimeter gate to the Nursery door and the hall doors for pupil access. The bike shed will not be available and children should not bring bikes or scooters with them.

2.2.11. In snowy conditions, children should still wear school uniform unless parents are texted to the contrary. Parents should consider allowing the children to wear boots into school and they can either wear these for the day or they may be asked to wear their plimsolls inside the school building. Parents are asked to support the school's policy but the overriding concern is to ensure that the children are warm and safe and the school will not question reasonable choices made by parents.

2.2.12. Dynamic risk assessments will continue throughout the day to see if we can clear more grounds – particularly the courtyard – to enable pupils some outside access.

2.2.13. If the school can otherwise be opened, it will not be closed on account of the kitchen being out of operation: in these circumstances families will be asked to send in a packed lunch for the children.

2.2.14. Although we will do all we can to remain open in challenging weather conditions, we may not be in a position to offer extended school hours. Sunrise and Sunset clubs (and Nursery extended hours) together with all after-school clubs, are likely to be cancelled in these conditions.

2.2.15. If the school is able to open in poor weather conditions, we will ask parents to make every reasonable effort to get the children into school as long as it is safe to do so.

3. Exceptional Circumstances

3.1. The School recognises that there may be cases where families are “cut off” due to particular difficulties in the area in which they live.

3.2. In such cases parents should advise the school office of their particular circumstances so the Head Teacher can justify to the Local Authority why the absence should be authorised.

4. In the event of heavy snowfall during the school day

4.1. If there is heavy snowfall during the school day the Head Teacher will decide whether it is necessary to close the school.

4.2. The Office will contact parents and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible.

4.3. The Staff that live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity.

4.4. A skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected.

4.5. 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, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher.