



Ryedene Primary and Nursery School

'Growing Together to Succeed'

Snow and Adverse Weather Policy

December 2024

(Next review December 2027)

In the event of disruption caused by heavy snow, the prime concern of the school must always be the safety of the pupils and staff. We will always endeavour to open the school in the event of bad weather, as long as it is safe to do so. The school will open during snow and bad weather but the decision as to whether or not to send a pupil to school, however, must be at the discretion of the parents, taking into account factors such as local road conditions and the availability of child-care.

Guiding Principle

- The Department of Education has stated: The decision to close, must, however be for the Headteachers as they know their school and surrounding areas. They should use common sense in assessing the risks and keep their schools open.
- The government has stressed the importance of schools remaining open wherever possible, as closures have a knock-on effect on parents/carers who are key workers in other areas of the public sector e.g. Health Services.
- Therefore, the guiding principle is that the school should remain open to the maximum degree possible as is consistent with health and safety, even if it is not possible to run the usual full timetable.

In the very unlikely event that the school needed to close, this would always be publicised via:

- BBC Essex (FM 103.5 and 95.3 729, and 1530 AM and DAB)
- Heart FM (102.6 and 96.3).
- Widespread school closures are listed on www.bbc.uk/essex and www.heartessex.co.uk
- School website
- StudyBugs message

If extreme weather develops during the day, we will aim to remain open until the end of the normal school day at 3.05/3.15pm. Staff will always make every reasonable effort to undertake the journey to school. It is appreciated that the journey may take longer than normal and therefore some staff may not be able to arrive before the normal start of the school day.

How parents can help

- Be prepared to give a packed lunch in case school meals staff cannot get to school and meals cannot be provided.
- Children, if possible and available, to come to school in wellies with shoes to change into.
- Remember suitable warm clothing: scarves, gloves. It may not be possible to dry clothing due to many classes having underfloor heating and not radiators so spare clothing may be necessary.
- Have a back-up plan ready with another family member in case you cannot pick up as usual. This will reduce staff having to remain and be unable to leave earlier for their own safety.

Continuing communication

The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the school during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence. In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child/children.

Parents are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility. The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances, parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority.

Parental responsibility

Parents acting on the assumption that the school is closed without checking, or not informing the school of their own particular circumstances, will unfortunately run the risk of their child being registered as unauthorised absence.

Safety around the school

- In the event of snow and ice, the school will make all efforts to clear and salt as many pathways as possible and as thoroughly as is reasonably possible.
However, it will not be possible to remove all snow and ice from all pathways so all children, parents, visitors and staff will need to take extra care.
- The above also applies to the staff car park, where there is a clear sign on entry stating that it will not be possible to remove all snow and ice from the car park and that extra care must be taken by all staff and visitors.
- Parents, children and visitors should be aware that pathways, even where cleared, can still be dangerous.
- Children will also be reminded of this in assemblies and morning class registration.
- Before and after school, parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the school playground.
- On school days where the school is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the Site Manager, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent build-up.
- In snowy weather, for health & safety reasons, we do not allow sliding or throwing of snowballs because if children fall or get covered in snow, they are then wet and uncomfortable throughout the day.
- Where possible, if children have suitable footwear, they will be permitted to go outside to enjoy the snow for at least a part of lunchtime and playtime.
- In the Headteacher's absence, the Deputy/Assistant Headteachers on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Snow.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if considered necessary.

Ryedene Primary School & Nursery Governing Body agreed this policy on 5th December 2024

Next review: December 2027