



## **Inclement Weather Arrangements: A Guide for Families**

It is always our intention to open the school whenever possible, however very rarely, it may be necessary to close the school for safeguarding reasons due to circumstances outside of our control such as the presence of heavy snow or ice. This guide summarises our arrangements for dealing with such conditions.

### **Challenges presented by heavy snow/ice**

- Sometimes we are advised of train or bus services being cancelled due to developing weather conditions. This is a particular concern when school is in session as a judgement requires to be made about the ability of our students to travel home.
- Being located on a hill, at a busy crossing, sometimes the access roads and pavements in and around the school can become very hazardous, especially when hard ice forms. Often, we find that pavements immediately outside of the school have not been gritted by the council and so we have to make a judgement on how safe it is to gain access to the school.
- A majority of our staff body drive to the school, with the majority of those who do not being heavily reliant upon public transport. In accordance with legislation there is a requisite quota of staff in order to ensure the safety of all children on site and sometimes during periods of extreme weather, staff invariably find it difficult or indeed impossible to commute to work. It can take time for us to be aware of numbers of staff who can get to school; many of them are parents and school arrangements for their own children at such times can impact their availability.
- In line with national Teaching Union agreements, we cannot redeploy timetabled teaching staff in the event of staff absences.

### **Our approach**

- Weather forecasts are constantly monitored, with preventative gritting taking place whenever possible. We maintain a large stock of grit and we prioritise main access routes and stairs with the intention of always maintaining access routes and fire evacuation routes.
- School usually opens by 7am, with our facilities team commencing at 7am. As soon as practicable, a judgement will be made based on the local weather conditions and the ability of the facilities team to deal with any unforeseen conditions. It may be the case that a delayed start to the school day would need to be implemented in order to allow additional time for the facilities team to make the site safe.
- During periods of inclement weather, we monitor public transport in the local area and we are understanding of the additional time that it may take students to arrive at school. Our priority is always their safe journey to and from school.

- Families who deem their daughter's journey to/from school is realistic should ensure that they have given consideration to arrangements for an early closure should the school require to close before 3:15pm.

#### **How closures will be communicated**

- At 7:30am or as near as possible, should alternative arrangements need to be put in place, or in the event of a school closure, an email and text message will be sent to all families. The school website will also be updated ([www.gegschool.org.uk](http://www.gegschool.org.uk) via the scrolling ticker tape at the top of the page) and we will advise the local authority of our closure. If possible, staff who may be on site will display signage on our external gates.
- Further updates will be issued as and when they become available, via the above communication methods. As the weather can change quite significantly over night, decisions may often need to be taken on a day by day basis.
- Should it be necessary to close the school once the school day has commenced, an email and text message will be sent home immediately, stating:
  - The reason for the closure
  - The time at which the school will close
  - Details for how a parent/carer can contact the school should their daughter not be able to make their own way home.
- It is therefore essential that all families update the school when any of their contact details change. Families can contact reception to request a personal details update form.