

## **Severe Weather Policy**

**Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:**

**Headteacher**

**Nominated Member of Governing Body Responsible for the policy:**

**Premises, Behaviour, Safeguarding and Mental Health**

**Date written:**

**May 2025**

**Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body:**

**June 2025**

**Date of next review:**

**June 2028**

**This policy will be reviewed every three years, and following any concerns and / or updates to National and Local guidance or procedures**

## Severe Weather Policy

### **What is meant by severe weather?**

Severe weather is classed as weather conditions which have an impact on service delivery. The weather may be heavy snow, black ice, fog, floods, strong winds or extreme heat,

In the event of disruption caused by severe weather the prime concern of the school must always be the safety of the pupils and staff.

The decision to close the school will take into account the safety of all our pupils and staff, some of whom travel a 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.

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance would put the health, safety or welfare of pupils and / or staff at risk.

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

- Insufficient staff are able to come into keep the school running safely
- Conditions on site are dangerous
- Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to become too hazardous for travel later in the day
- Temperatures are forecast to be extreme and a met office Amber to Red alert issued

### **If the school closes in the morning**

A text message will be sent out to all parents / carers as early as possible. The closure will be register dob Twitter (X) by using the Sheffield City Council weather alert system (Appendix 1)

**Staff will be informed of the closure as early as possible via the school's group What's App**

### **Closure during the school day**

The safety and well-being of pupils is paramount.

A text message will be sent to parents / carers as soon as the decision is made to close the school.

Staff who have long distances to travel will be allowed to leave as soon as safe to do so.

Staff who live locally will stay until all children are collected

### **Parents / carers responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that the school has up to date emergency contact information

In severe weather parents are reminded to check the school website, their text messages and Twitter for closure announcements

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal, in these cases no late marks will be recorded. During official closures all absences are counted as authorised.

To provide sun hats and high factor sun protection during extreme heat

### **Staff responsibilities**

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.

Staff should encourage children to dress appropriately for the weather.

Encourage children to drink plenty of water during extreme heat

### **School Premises**

In the event of snow, pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. A sign will be placed in key areas.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide or throw snow and ice on the school playground.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt pathways as follows:

- Pathway from the main gate to the main entrance
- Pathway around the school building to KS1 classrooms
- Route from the car park to the staff entrance and where possible around parking bays
- Areas affected by ice will be covered in rock salt

Where necessary essential paths will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

During significant adverse weather conditions, school will be open from 8.45 am for children to come inside into their classrooms

During adverse weather conditions, the playground will be out of bounds to children during break and lunchtimes

### **Extreme Heat**

Hot weather and heatwaves can pose serious health risks to pupils and staff, especially young children and those with medical needs.

During extreme heat the school will:

- Relax uniform rules during hot weather.
- Drink plenty of water at all times
- Children will be encouraged to stay in the shade where possible, wear sun hats and sun protection
- Doors in classrooms to be propped open
- Windows opened first thing in the morning and closed when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors.
- Classroom blinds to be closed
- Electric lighting to be kept to a minimum
- Mechanical fans to be provided to increase air movement
- Extreme physical activity to be kept to a minimum during high temperatures

### **What are the signs of heat related medical conditions in children?**

If sensible precautions are taken, children are unlikely to be seriously affected by hot conditions but staff should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke

#### **Symptoms of heat stress:**

- Children may seem out of character or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including those listed below for heat exhaustion)
- These signs will worsen with physical activity

#### **Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include:**

- Tiredness

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin

**To cool a child suffering from heat exhaustion:**

- Move the child to a cool area and encourage them to drink cool water
- Cool the child as rapidly as possible, for example, by sponging or spraying the child with cool water and placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, or wrapping the child in a cool, wet sheet and assist cooling with a fan

If there are any concerns about symptoms, or they are worsening, seek medical advice by contacting NHS 111. Heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke and is a medical emergency

**Symptoms of heatstroke may include**

- Confusion or lack of co-ordination
- Seizures (fits)
- Loss of consciousness
- High body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F)
- Red, hot skin that can be sweaty or dry
- Fast heartbeat
- Fast shallow breathing
- Diarrhoea

If heatstroke is suspected, call 999 and then cool the child down whilst waiting for medical assistance

**If a child loses consciousness, or has a fit**

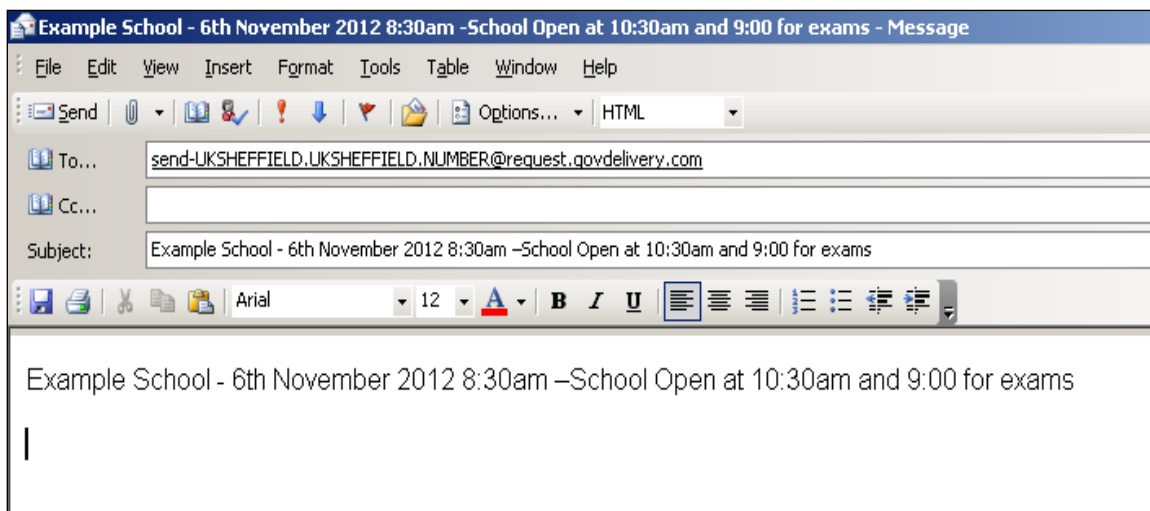
- Place the child in the recovery position
- Call 999 immediately and follow their instructions

**In the Headteacher's absence the Deputy Headteacher will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy during the school day**

## Appendix - Sending messages/alerts using School Alert

1. **Login to your registered email address:** This is a school email address that you will have used to sign up to the system.  
**Email log in details - [alerts@portercroft.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:alerts@portercroft.sheffield.sch.uk)**  
**Password - Moxon@123**
2. **Compose your message.**

**Important Note** - The subject of the email that you send automatically goes out as a tweet through the Sheffield City Council twitter account. Please make sure that the subject of the email is no more than 140 characters and contains this information - school name, time of message, message e.g. closed/open late. An example of how to complete an email alert is -



### 3. Where to send your alert:

You will have received an email address with a unique number which will look like - **send-UKSHEFFIELD.UKSHEFFIELD\_****NUMBER****@request.govdelivery.com**

### 4. System confirmation e-mail – **IMPORTANT**

- Once you have sent an email, you will receive an email response back from the system within a few minutes asking you to confirm that you have sent this email and would like it to be published.
- You need to click on the confirmation link within the email you receive.
- A browser window will open and a confirmation message will be displayed. **If you don't confirm your message, the alert will not go out.**

The system will then automatically publish the content of the email message (by email or RSS feed) to -

- Parents subscribed to your School's topic
- Sheffield City Council school closure web pages
- Sheffield City Council Twitter Account
- Radio Sheffield / Hallam FM

### 5. Sending out further alerts:

Please follow steps 1-4 again