

## **Adverse weather conditions policy**

The Blake School will make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

The decision to close the school is a local one and will be made by leaders on site at the time who are best placed to evaluate the risks to pupils, staff and visitors. The decision to close the school will be based on access to essential services (heating, water etc.), staffing levels, transport safety, and site safety.

If the school is anticipating closure either at the beginning of the school day or during the school day, the Headteacher will consult, wherever possible, with the Chair of Governors before any decision is made.

### **The school may be closed if -**

- insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely;
- weather conditions mean that travel to school is considered too hazardous;
- conditions on site are felt to be dangerous;
- weather conditions are advised to be, or are anticipated to later, become too hazardous for travel.

The health and safety of children, parents and staff are paramount when taking any decision to close the school. Prior to making a decision to close the school the following will be considered -

- the basic entitlement of 190 'pupil days' which should be offered if at all possible;
- closing the school to just some year groups and/or changing the opening and closing time to avoid complete closure;
- restricting access to the site/buildings as an alternative to complete closure;
- offering a reduced curriculum provision as an alternative.

If the school is anticipated to be closed for a significant period of time, teachers will set work to be completed at home.

### **Advising of school closure**

If the decision is made to close the school, it will be communicated in as timely way as possible to limit staff and parent risks in attempting to travel to the school site.

- Families will be informed via e-mail/text message through the school's texting/email and a notice will be placed on the school website.
- Where possible, closure signs will be displayed at the entrance to the school.
- Staff will be informed by text message including any before school/breakfast club staff and school meal providers.
- The school will inform Oxfordshire County Council of the closure and information will be placed on the OCC school's closure webpage and be announced through local media outlets.
- The school will inform ODST senior officers using the mobile phone numbers listed in the 'ODST Emergency Procedures'.
- The headteacher will ensure that governors are kept informed of the school's closure.

The Blake School appreciates that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents and will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation during adverse weather conditions, particularly in terms of advising on the reopening of the site for all or some pupils.

In the event of adverse weather conditions children will not be criticised if there is a slight delay in arrival. The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal but expects parents to advise the school to let them know that pupils are on their way and likely to be delayed so that they are safeguarded on their journey.

In the event of snow, pathways on the school site will be, as far as possible, cleared and salted. All users of the school site should be aware that pathways, even where cleared, may remain dangerous.

### **Recording absence during adverse weather**

The Blake School recognises there will be isolated instances where families may be cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents/carers should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation. Parents acting on the assumption that the school will be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevent their child coming into school, risk their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

### **In the event of the weather being significantly hotter than usual –**

- the school will encourage children to drink regularly, drinking water bottles will be refilled throughout the day;
- parents/carers will be asked to provide hats for their children to wear outdoors;
- indoor break times may occur if it is felt necessary for children to stay indoors;
- parents/carers will be reminded to apply sun cream to their children at home before school;
- school events e.g. PE / sports day may be postponed or cancelled;
- outdoor extra-curricular activities may be cancelled. (Parents/carers will be informed)

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

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 via text, or phone message and advised of the deteriorating conditions and asked to collect their child/ren early. Parents/carers who are delayed due to the adverse weather conditions, should contact the school as soon as possible to give an anticipated arrival time.

All children will be supervised until a parent/carer is able to collect them, appropriate adult:pupil ratios will be maintained in this circumstance.

Parental requests to collect their children early owing to weather conditions will only be contemplated in extreme circumstances.