



Adverse Weather Policy

Junior School (Nursery – Year 6)

This policy is the responsibility Head of Juniors and the Operations Manager.

Last review: January 24

Next review: January 26

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Introduction

It is our intention that, if it is deemed safe to do so, the School will be open on all normal school days, even when some poor road conditions exist. However, in the event of adverse weather conditions, particularly a heavy snowfall, we cannot guarantee that staff will be able to attend school in the normal manner.

On such occasions, and in a bid to ensure the safety of all staff, pupils and their parents/carers, a decision to close the school or restrict school opening may have to be made.

This document covers the contingencies made for adverse weather conditions which may result in an enforced school closure or the restricted opening of St Mary's Junior School.

Reasons for Closure

It may be necessary to close the school during extreme weather conditions for a variety of reasons including:

- Conditions on the site (school site, site entrances, on site roadways) are considered unsafe for the users (pupils, staff, visitors and parents)
- Insufficient staff arrive at work for school to operate safely
- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Accommodation and utility problems for example loss of power supply, heating failure
- Advice from Police or Fire Authorities

This plan aims to prevent:

- The stranding of staff, pupils and their parents/carers caused by them taking unnecessary risks travelling to and from school.
- Potential impact on children's education.
- Accidents on the school site.

These will be mitigated by adopting a well-rehearsed operation plan, good communication and planning across the whole school community, the implementation of the school's remote education plan and through live risk assessment of the situation in hand.

Decision to Close

The decision to close the school before or during the school day will rest with the Head of Juniors, in collaboration with the Head of School, or in their absence the Deputy Head, in consultation with the site team.

The decision to close will be made, where possible, by 7.15am, on the basis of information from:

- Media about the weather, conditions of local roads, paths and public transport availability
- Updates from staff
- Met Office
- Local Authority

The school will inform ISI of the closure and when the school is open again – via phone or email.

If the weather conditions are severe enough to force the closure of the school or necessitate restricted opening hours, this decision will be communicated to parents via the following means:

- Parent Email via iSAMS
- Social Media
- Phone calls

An emergency phone tree will be used to ensure effective communication to the school community (see appendix 1)

Enforced School Closure

If the school is forced to close, a member of staff (where possible) will be available at school to ensure that messages and communication are maintained for the first two hours of closure (7.30am–9.30am). Thereafter, the school will be empty. Should it not be possible for a member of staff to be in school, parents will be informed to contact juniorschool@stmaryscambridge.co.uk and a nominated member of staff will monitor and respond to emails.

In the event of an enforced school closure, we cannot look after children in school. Any pupils who were dropped off to school prior to a decision being made, will be looked after until such a time that they can be safely collected. The school will liaise closely with individual parents/carers.

Children arriving after an enforced school closure decision has been made will not be permitted to enter the school and parents will be requested to take them home.

Restricted School Opening

This occurs when the school is open for reduced hours as some but not all staff or pupils may be able to attend owing to extreme weather conditions.

It is sometimes appropriate to amend the opening hours of the school rather than close the school, for example, opening later in the day or shortening the day. This should always be considered as an alternative to closure. If the Head of Juniors approves restricted school opening hours, then the school will aim to open at 8.30am and close at 3pm, but this will be subject to change dependent of conditions. If conditions continue to deteriorate during the day, the Head of Juniors may communicate an earlier closure time via email or use of the emergency phone tree. Individual phone calls to parents who cannot be contacted will be made.

The senior member of staff on site will organise the staffing allocations irrespective of their normal responsibilities. The priorities will be (in order of importance): Safe supervision of the children. Continuity of educational needs. Alternative activities matched to the age of the children and the skills of the staff member will be offered if priority (ii) is not possible owing to staffing levels or other imposed restrictions.

Where teaching staff are unable to travel to school safely, they will contact parents directly via email by 9.30am with work packs to be completed at home.

During restricted school opening, wraparound care provision will not be available. After school staff meetings and parent meetings will be rescheduled.

We will relax our high expectations of punctuality in the interest of safety. Children will not receive a late mark or an unauthorised absence during adverse weather conditions, if you have decided that it is not safe for you and your child to travel.

Travel to School (Car & Minibus)

Parents and guardians are asked to exercise extreme caution when dropping off or collecting their children by car. The school will operate its usual Drop Off and Collection Zone outside the school's main front door.

If your child travels to school via the school minibus, you will be contacted by text by 7am if this service is NOT running.

Parents who wish to collect their children early due to the road conditions may do so and, where possible, should email or contact reception so that staff can arrange to have children ready and waiting.

Alternative Collection Arrangements

In the event of a school closure /restricted opening, if parents are unable to collect their child themselves, they may arrange for a nominated adult to collect on their behalf. In all cases, advance consent must be provided to school in writing via email to juniorschool@stmaryscambridge.co.uk , giving details of the person's name and relationship to the child. In emergency situations, the school will accept instruction by telephone.

Setting Work for Pupils

The school will set work accordingly due to the closure of the school or inability of large numbers of pupils to attend due to the adverse weather conditions. This will be communicated electronically.

In the unlikely event that staff are unable to set work, age-appropriate enrichment activities will be emailed to parents for pupils to access.

Communication with School

Parents can contact school via the main telephone number. We ask for your patience at times when it is likely to be busy. It may be necessary to leave a message or call back. Alternatively, if safe to do so, parents can email the school office, juniorschool@stmaryscambridge.co.uk For non-urgent queries, parents may email their child's class teacher directly.

Support if Stranded in School

A member of staff will remain in school and will support and care for all children until they have been collected. Parents should collect their children from the main reception. The kitchen holds a small stock of food which will be used to provide a snack or meal to any pupils and staff who are stranded in school. The school is centrally heated, and this should not be affected. Additional portable heaters are available. In the event of a school closure being enforced due to the breakdown of the heating system, communication will be through the means outlined above.

Snow Clearance and Salting

When the site is snowy or icy, a small number of designated access routes will be identified, kept clear and gritted by the site team and other available staff. Thick snow may not be cleared as this can often be safer than a cleared route that has refrozen. Compacted snow will be cleared, and ice will be gritted.

If the risk to pupils and staff safety around the school site is increased during a day then they will be restricted to indoors areas. At the Heads discretion the playground/school grounds may be out of bounds at the beginning, break times and end of the school day.

Additional areas may be coned off to prevent access, particularly in the playground. All staff, pupils, parents and visitors should exercise extreme caution when on and around the school grounds during periods of ice and snow.

Q&A – For Adverse Weather Days When School Remains Open

Q: Will I be contacted?

A: Yes, by one of the methods outlined above. However, school may not be able to contact parents individually unless in an emergency.

Q: Do I need to contact school?

A: If you decide not to travel because of the road conditions, please let us know so we can update our registers. You should do this by sending an email to the school office and your child's teacher should be copied in. If you are planning to come into school but may be late, please advise reception so we know when to expect your child and include them in our planning decisions e.g. for school lunch and classroom allocations.

Q: Should I travel to school or not?

A: We ask that you check the latest communications from school, together with the local weather and news to get the latest advice / information about the conditions in your local area and the school. Parents/carers should then make their own informed choice about whether it is safe for them to make the journey into school. Where possible, the school will try to ensure that there is someone available to greet pupils on arrival. If you arrive at school, children remain their parent's responsibility until they are handed over to a member of the staff team. Under no circumstance should a child be left unattended at school. Please keep us informed if you are delayed on your way to collect your child. All children will be cared for in School until they can be safely collected.

Q: Will there be outdoor playtimes?

A: Yes. Outdoor playtimes will still take place as long as the senior member of staff on duty, in consultation with the Site Manager, deems it safe to do so. Please ensure that your child has suitable clothing, winter coat, hat, scarves, gloves and wellingtons as a minimum. On snow days, pupils must bring suitable clothes and footwear with them. They should also bring a change of clothes, including socks. If your child does not have these then they may have to remain indoors.

Q: When should I collect my child?

A: If the School is open, parents should collect their child at the normal time unless: Personal circumstances dictate that you need to collect your child early to facilitate safe travel. Please advise school of your estimated time of arrival. The weather/road situation deteriorates and the Head of Juniors deems that the school needs to close earlier than normal to ensure safe travel for all. This decision will be communicated with parents via email. Where parents do not respond to an early closure email, parents will be contacted by phone. If the school is placed under restricted opening due to safety concerns over travel, then pick up for Pre-Prep children will be 2.30pm and pick up for Prep children will be at 3.00pm when the school will close.

Q: What will be the impact on education?

A: The School will aim to remain open and limit any impact on education, but the safety of our pupils and staff is the main priority. On days when the school has restricted opening, children IN SCHOOL may not be taught by their usual teachers or in their usual classes. Work packs will be emailed out directly to parents as soon as possible for all other children.

Appendix 1 – School Phone Tree

1. HEAD OF JUNIORS
2. DEPUTY HEAD HEAD OF MARKETING CHAIR OF PTA
3. ASSISTANT HEADS SOCIAL MEDIA & WHOLE SCHOOL EMAIL CLASS REPS
4. SECTIONS OF SCHOOL