

# Severe Weather Policy (Snow & Ice)

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**‘Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God...’**

**Matthew 6.33**

At St Patrick's Catholic College all members of our school community are valued and we fully respect our responsibility of safeguarding and looking after all members of this community.

## **1.0 Policy Aims and Objectives**

1.1 St. Patrick Catholic College’s policy aims to maintain safe access, egress and routes across the college site as far as reasonably practical with the resources available.

1.2 All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the college remains open as normal and partial closure will always be considered before the decision is made to completely close the college.

## **2.0 Management Plan and Procedures**

2.1 A management plan has been devised together with a generic risk assessment to describe how the procedures will be implemented and put into practice in order to meet the aims and objectives of the policy.

2.2 Due to the size of the site it is recognised that it is impossible to immediately clear snow and ice from all the pathways on the site. The procedures do however, require those responsible to exercise careful judgement in prioritising key access, egress and routes throughout the site as well as outline the responsibilities of all users to exercise their own initiative in ensuring their own and others safety during times of snow and ice in the college grounds.

## **3.0 Responsibilities:**

### **3.1 Governing Body –**

- Responsibility for this policy has been delegated to the Governors’ Premises, Health and Safety Committee. In order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures in minimising the risks from snow and ice, the policy will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the Autumn Term in conjunction with any Annual Accident Analysis.

### **3.2 Headteacher –**

- Ensure means of access, egress and routes across the college are safe for employees, pupils and visitors and that adequate arrangements are made to

ensure that the risks from snow and ice are minimised. In circumstances when safe access, egress and safe routes cannot be achieved and with the agreement of the Chair of Governors, close or partially close the college and communicate the closure/partial closure to all relevant parties.

- Consider how snow and ice may affect the operation of the school e.g. transport difficulties in getting to college and the availability of staff and other services.
- Advise parents and students of the risks during ice and snow and the importance of suitable footwear.

### ***3.3 Facilities / Site Manager -***

- Formulate a policy and management plan for approval by the Governors' Premises, Health and Safety Committee which will enable the Headteacher to fully discharge their responsibilities as described in paragraph 3.2.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and management plan and report any concerns to the Governors' Premises, Health and Safety Committee.
- Include information regarding the effectiveness of this policy and management plan in the Annual Analysis of Accidents.
- Develop procedures and maintain records to include:
  - Generic risk assessment for clearance of snow and ice from site and communicate procedures and methods of work to Premises staff.
  - Written and recorded 'day specific' risk assessment for clearance of snow and ice from site and communicate procedures and methods of work to Premises staff.
  - Site map detailing order of priority for clearing of snow and ice and communicate to Premises staff.
  - Proactively monitor the weather forecast and initiate preventative measures to manage risks from snow and ice.
  - Proactively monitor current conditions and react to changing priorities, e.g. communicating temporary closure of playgrounds/pathways, amending/ increasing working hours of Premises staff to deal with increased levels of snow and ice.
  - Ensure sufficient supply of suitable equipment and salt grit/other materials are available in order to meet demand.

### ***3.4 Premises Staff -***

- The immediate clearance of snow and ice in designated areas, in line with the procedures and shown on the site map.
- Ensuring equipment provided to clear snow and ice is maintained in a satisfactory condition.
- Temporary closure of designated areas until cleared. Such areas should be clearly marked, e.g. signage, tape etc.
- Maintain records of clearance and temporary closures on caretaking sheets.

### ***3.5 All staff -***

- Be aware that when areas have had salt grit/other materials applied it is not a guarantee that the paths are completely safe or slip-proof; please travel with caution when moving around site.
- Be aware of the risk assessment in place for snow and ice and take responsibility for following the designated routes when such conditions exist.
- Safeguarding their own, colleagues' and students' health and safety.
- Ensure appropriate footwear is worn to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.
- Report any internal wet areas/external icy patches to the Reception who will inform the Premises staff to enable them to position wet floor signs/mop up any excess water/re-apply salt grit/other materials.
- Communicate to students the need to wear appropriate footwear in snow and ice and to exercise caution when moving around site.

#### ***4.0 Clearance Procedures***

4.1 During severe weather site staff will suspend their other duties and priority will be given to clearing snow and ice.

4.2 All Site Staff will be provided with suitable equipment and Personal Protective Equipment.

4.3 In order of priority shown on the site map, treat paths with salt grit/other materials to maintain safe access, egress and routes across the site.

4.4 Identify any particularly dangerous areas which require extra care and should be checked/treated more frequently e.g. steps, slopes, gullies which may be hidden etc.

4.5 Where snow has fallen, clear a path 1 metre wide in order of priority shown on the site map and treat cleared paths with salt grit/other materials to maintain a clear pathway especially where temperatures remain below freezing.

4.6 Routes will be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred. Additional care should be taken when clearing sloping pathways and steps, it may be necessary for safety reasons to consider the temporary closure of some non-essential areas of the premises (e.g. steep pathways, playgrounds, etc.) to avoid risks to staff, pupils or visitors. An assessment of the situation will be made by the Facilities/ Site Manager.

4.6 To gain the most economical and environmental solution the minimum amount of salt grit should be used. As a guide a good handful is sufficient to treat 1m<sup>2</sup>.

4.7 There is no advantage in applying grit salt/other materials to deep snow; this should be cleared from the path first.

4.8 When severe weather is forecast site staff will spread salt grit/other materials the night before as well as on arrival at 6am or earlier by arrangement.

4.9 In extreme conditions the Facilities/Site Manager will investigate the snow clearing services at the local authority.

4.10 The gritting of roads and pavements outside the site are dealt with separately by Stockton Borough Council.



## 6.0 Risk Assessment

<b>1. Hazard</b>	<b>2. People Affected</b>
Snow and ice	Employees, Students and Visitors, Premises Staff

### Risks and Controls

<b>Risks to Employees, Students and Visitors</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Control</b>
Slips, trips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff aware of the Snow and Ice Policy, risk assessment, procedures and routes to be followed and reinforce these to students and visitors.</li> <li>• Barrier matting in place at all entrances.</li> </ul>

<b>Risks to Premises Staff</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Control</b>
Manual Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff training in manual handling techniques. Where possible, purpose built push or motorised equipment used, i.e. spreader.</li> </ul>
Exposure due to low external temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protective, warm clothing including hat and gloves worn.</li> <li>• Take regular breaks.</li> </ul>
Slips, trips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow and ice over shoe protectors issued.</li> <li>• Adopt route which minimizes the need to walk over uncleared areas, clearing heavily used paths first.</li> </ul>
Injury caused by salt when spreading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goggles and cut resistant insulated gloves worn.</li> </ul>
Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take regular breaks.</li> </ul>

**Should bad weather begin  
during a day at school**

Maintain teaching until the  
next 'natural' break when we  
can gather pupils together

SLT to liaise with Site Staff and  
local authority re: transport &  
weather

Alert pupils to the fact that the  
school will need to close

Inform children that they may  
stay on site until it is safe for  
them to go home

Give pupils any information  
about public transport or  
pedestrian routes they may  
need

Tell pupils what we are able to  
provide in terms of lunch  
(depending on time of day)

Ask pupils to ring home to  
discuss with their parents  
what they should do & give  
access to phones for those  
who need this.

Release pupils who are able to  
go home and supervise those  
who wish to stay on the school  
premises. (Pupils opting to go  
home must leave the school  
premises at once)

\*Wherever possible, staff will be  
immediately released to travel  
home based on their distance from  
the College and consideration of the  
route that they must take.

Staff from Thornaby will be asked to  
support their colleagues in the  
College's decision.

Any decision regarding closure of the school due to severe weather conditions will be made quickly with the safety of staff and pupils paramount.

**Should bad weather be forecast for the next day whilst we are at school**

Every attempt will be made to make and communicate a decision before pupils leave school at the end of the day.

This decision will be one of the following:

The School will definitely close. In which case nobody, staff or pupils, should come in on the next day and pupils families should check the website or local radio stations.

The School may close. In this case, staff will be contacted via text and pupils' families will need to check the website or local radio stations from 6.30am the next day.

**Should bad weather begin overnight or be forecast for the next day whilst we are at Home**

The Headteacher will make a decision by 6.20 am on the day on which the bad weather occurs.

If the school is due to close staff will be informed by text from the staff member responsible in the Emergency tree.

If the school is due to close this will be announced on the website and local radio stations for pupils and their families.

The message on the answer machine and the absence line will be updated if appropriate.

## **7.0 POLICY FOR STAFF**

The School recognises that adverse weather conditions can prevent employees from reaching their normal place of employment. All employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend for work, but without taking undue risks and compromising their health and safety.

Unless informed to the contrary, there will be a briefing for all staff and support staff at 8:15am in the Staff Room to deliver information about any of the arrangements to be put in place for the day. At this meeting the Headteacher or Senior Director (or senior member of staff present) will outline the situation and the plan of action. Further meetings will be arranged as necessary.

### **Teaching Staff**

Teaching Staff who are unable to make it in to work must inform school by 7:30am where possible, and at the very latest 8:00am.

### **Support Staff**

Support staff must report to their Line Manager by 8:15am with an update of their circumstances. Those staff who are unable to contact their Line Manager must contact the School via 01642 613327. This procedure must be followed for each day of absence to ensure the Headteacher is aware of staff availability throughout the period of bad weather.

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Approved by Governors:

May 2015

Review Date:

May 2017 (or earlier if necessary)