



MARTIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Adverse Weather Policy

Reviewed and ratified: autumn 2025

Reviewed every three years

Statement of intent

It is the aim of Martin Primary School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals'
- UKHSA (2025) 'Adverse Weather and Health Plan'
- DfE (2023) 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- School Uniform Policy

Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28

Every child has the right to a good quality education.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather
- informing parents and staff of any closure
- deciding whether pupils should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity
- ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment
- ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level
- ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety
- ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy.

The premises manager is responsible for:

- completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting
- ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy
- ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the headteacher of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- adhering to the requirements of this policy
- reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the headteacher
- the safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves
- wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather
- modelling good practice in terms of sun safety
- encouraging pupils to stay appropriately hydrated.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises
- collecting their children when the school needs to close
- keeping all their contact information up-to-date
- ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

Pupils are responsible for:

- following the School Uniform Policy
- following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.

3. School closure

The headteacher has signed the school up to receive Weather-Health Alerts from the UKHSA and Met Office. The headteacher will make a local assessment and use

appropriate websites to monitor the weather and will initiate all appropriate procedures in response to any adverse weather conditions.

The decision to close the school will be made by the headteacher and the premises manager. The Chair of Governors will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher will assume the responsibility of the headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

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

- conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site
- staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- the headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message or email
- the headteacher will post an update on the school website
- the site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates
- the headteacher will inform the LA.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration with the headteacher. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of pupils.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only and all pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

At the headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.

All persons entering the school buildings will be asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

5. Procedures for gritting

The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by pupils and staff. This includes the main entrance of the school, as well as the following areas:

- the pavement along Plane Tree Walk
- a path in the top playground
- a path in the middle playground
- the path leading from the bottom gate
- the path leading from the Nursery gate
- the path leading into the Reception outdoor learning area.

The premises manager will ensure that the identified areas have been gritted and are safe for use. Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted will be clearly marked or cordoned off to prevent staff, pupils and visitors from entering.

The premises manager will monitor the supply of grit to ensure that there is a sufficient amount to clear ice and snow. The premises manager will also ensure that there are adequate supplies of equipment, e.g. shovels and gloves, to support gritting and clearance of key routes through the premises. Any damaged or defective equipment will be replaced.

6. Health and safety

The school will recognise its duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds. The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds. Staff members must take responsibility for the health and safety of any pupils under their supervision.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the premises manager in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the headteacher will be informed of the outcome.

Closing the school will be a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during adverse cold weather, the school will:

- ensure heating systems are maintained and in good working order, prioritising rooms being used where appropriate
- draught-proof windows, doors and other points of energy loss
- close rooms or buildings that are too cold to be used
- ventilate indoor spaces, especially where people gather, to help reduce the risk of infections spreading
- promote the flu vaccine for eligible staff and pupils, and encourage parents to keep their children up to date with routine immunisations
- reinforce messaging around the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene
- encourage physical activity where appropriate to help keep pupils warm
- provide information to parents and pupils on important logistical changes, e.g. disrupted bus routes, during severe weather
- ensure pupils have a sufficient supply of hot meals and snacks
- signpost parents to key sources of support, e.g. heating and other energy efficiency measures, during cold weather periods.

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during periods of extreme heat, the school will:

- communicate promptly with parents and carers during heatwaves to provide reminders about suitable clothing, hats, sunscreen and hydration
- adjust daily routines where appropriate, including rescheduling or relocating outdoor activities, modifying uniform expectations and ensuring access to shaded areas
- monitor indoor temperatures and, where necessary, implement additional ventilation, relocate classes to cooler rooms or consider early collection in exceptional circumstances
- provide staff with guidance and reminders on recognising and responding to heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke, following first-aid procedures already outlined in this policy
- encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed
- encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

Where a pupil is suffering from heat exhaustion, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- moving the pupil to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
- cooling the pupil as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, and assisting cooling using a fan
- where the pupil does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called

- if the pupil loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the pupil will continue until the ambulance arrives.

Where a pupil is suspected to be suffering from heatstroke, 999 will be called immediately and the pupil will be cooled down in line with the procedures for managing heat exhaustion outlined above whilst awaiting medical assistance.

Where a pupil loses consciousness or experiences a fit or seizure, they will be placed in the recovery position, 999 will be called immediately and staff will follow the operator's instructions.

7. Attendance

Where the school is officially closed, all absence will be registered as authorised.

When a pupil cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the headteacher believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school is closed, without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevent the child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school will understand that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It will therefore be at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff. No maximum class size limits are set out; a limit of 30 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

8. Clothing

During the summer months, when temperatures reach above 25 degrees Celsius (°C), everyone working at or attending the school will be encouraged to protect their face,

neck and ears using a sun-safe hat with a wide brim. Baseball caps or visors are not considered sun-safe hats.

Pupils without sun-safe hats will only be permitted to play in an area protected from the sun, unless a sun-safe hat has been provided. Pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be required to play in an area protected from the sun, if spare clothing cannot be provided.

During the Winter months, pupils are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

9. Critical Incidents

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the Critical Incidents Policy.

The Critical Incidents Policy will contain:

- information on where to find parents' contact details
- staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies
- details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- contact and liaise with emergency services
- provide first aid
- move pupils to a safe place
- calm and comfort children
- contact parents
- deal with any media interest.