



St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Adverse and Extreme Weather Policy

Academic Year	Designated Senior Person	Deputy Designated Senior Person	Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
2023-2024	J McEniff	P Harkness	E Morrissey	E Morrissey
2024-2025	J McEniff	P Harkness	E Morrissey	E Morrissey
2025-2026	J McEniff	P Harkness	E Morrissey	E Morrissey

Policy Review Date	Changes made	By whom	Date ratified with FGB
November 2023	New policy	J McEniff / A. Bennett	November 2023
July 2026	Heatwave guidance added	J.McEniff	November 2026

1. Mission Statement

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
(John 10:10)

At St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School,
we **love** one another,
show **respect** and accept **responsibility**.
Embracing **opportunity** and nurturing **creativity**
we share in the **joy** of Jesus.



Introduction

This policy focuses on the impact that adverse and extreme weather may have upon school and what action to take should there be doubt or concern regarding safety. All information gathered to inform decisions made should be sourced from the MET Office in collaboration with the staff knowledge of the site in question.

High Winds

High winds can pose risks to outdoor sessions and activities in a number of ways; primarily due to the nature of our school being situated near woodland and beneath trees that can be affected by wind-speed/force.

A number of factors should be considered when assessing the potential risk of forecasted or observed winds: topography; the variety, age and species of trees; soil type; infrastructure; onsite facilities; (all of which have been considered in the following information).

When assessing wind-speed forecasts, the leading member of SLT should rely upon forecasts given by the MET Office. Other forecasters can be used to gain an idea of the spectrum of forecasted wind, but ultimately the MET Office forecast should determine any action that need be taken.

MET office forecasts are issued in MPH (miles per hour). The MET office will forecast an hourly average wind-speed as well as the highest gust in any given hour. Details can be found at www.metoffice.gov.uk

These should be used in conjunction with the Beaufort Scale to achieve insight into expected conditions on site.

The Beaufort Scale is as follows:

Force	MPH	Description	Specification for Use on Land
0	0-1	Calm	Calm; smoke rises vertically
1	1-3	Light Air	Direction of wind shown by smoke drift, but not wind by vanes
2	4-7	Light Breeze	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle, ordinary vanes moved by wind
3	8-12	Gentle Breeze	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; wind extends a light flag
4	13-18	Moderate Breeze	Raises dust and loose paper; small branches are moved
5	19-24	Fresh Breeze	Small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters

6	25-31	Strong Breeze	Large branches in motion; whistling hears in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty
7	32-38	Near Gale	Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking against the wind

The following table considers individual site characteristics and dictates the use of the site as a result of actual/forecasted wind speed.

Wind including gusts	<31 mph (force 6)	32-39mph (force 7/8)	40-46mph (force 8)	>46mph
Playgrounds + Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) areas	Fine to use all of site	Playground ok, stay away from grass and tree areas	STAY INSIDE	STAY INSIDE

The above criteria can be difficult to measure and judge on site for the time of observation. Much of the assessment of whether or not to use the outdoor areas will be made (preferably 24 hours) prior to the school commencing with the information provided by the MET Office.

However, leading staff are in a position of duty to cancel activities with regards to safety **at any point** and should use their experience and judgement to inform this decision at the time of cancellation, whether a given session has begun or not.

Low Temperature, Snow, and Ice

A combination of low temperatures, snow and ice can lead to dangerous conditions for schools. We need to take into account the safety of our children, parents and staff on site.

Heavy snow will cause the roads to become dangerous almost instantly, as well as the risk of people not being able to get their cars out of the car park and therefore be stuck. Very low temperatures during sessions can also pose a risk, especially to the children, and should be factored in. The correct clothing worn during a short 2-hour session may be fine when the temperatures drop.

Weather Warnings and What They Mean

Please follow the MET Office for your decision making. The Mobile APP is useful.

Further information can be found at

www.metoffice.gov.uk/guide/weather/warnings

YELLOW	Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of your day-to-day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation and yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days.
AMBER	There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you, which could potentially disrupt your plans and possibly cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office.
RED	Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel, and power disruption and risk to life is likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

When to consider action

- Heavy snow (enough to settle on the roads) that may make the roads dangerous or inhibit families and staff accessing the campus.
- Heavy snow the day before a school day where the temperature does not go above freezing during the night, causing the roads on campus to freeze.
- Temperatures are below freezing, with a wind chill factor around the -5 to -10 range could be reason to stay indoors.

Any **Amber** warnings issued

Any **Red** warnings issued

High Temperatures and Heatwaves

High temperatures can pose significant risks to pupils, staff and visitors, particularly young children, those with medical conditions, and individuals undertaking physical activity. Prolonged periods of hot weather can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke and reduced concentration, affecting both wellbeing and learning.

The school will take a proportionate approach to managing high temperatures, guided by Met Office forecasts, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Heat Health Alerts, local conditions and professional judgement.

Control Measures During Hot Weather

Where high temperatures are forecast or experienced, the school may implement the following measures:

- Ensure all pupils and staff have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Encourage regular hydration breaks.
- Advise parents to provide suitable sun hats and apply long-lasting sunscreen before school.
- Utilise shaded areas of the playground and school grounds wherever possible.
- Restrict or modify outdoor physical activities, sports and PE sessions.
- Keep classrooms well ventilated using windows, blinds and curtains as appropriate.
- Move activities to cooler indoor areas where possible.
- Allow adaptations to school uniform requirements where agreed by the Headteacher.
- Closely monitor pupils and staff who may be more vulnerable to heat-related illness.

Heat Health Alerts

The school will monitor Heat Health Alerts issued by the UK Health Security Agency and weather forecasts issued by the Met Office.

Alert Level	School Response
Yellow Alert	Monitor conditions, encourage hydration, utilise shade and review outdoor activities.
Amber Alert	Consider reducing outdoor activities, amend PE and sports provision, increase hydration breaks and review classroom temperatures.
Red Alert	Consider keeping pupils indoors during peak temperatures, cancel outdoor events and activities, and assess whether additional

measures are required to maintain the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

When to Consider Action

SLT should consider additional control measures when:

- Temperatures are forecast to exceed **27°C** during the school day.
- Temperatures inside classrooms become uncomfortably high and begin to affect learning or wellbeing.
- Heat Health Alerts are issued by the UK Health Security Agency.
- Pupils or staff show signs of heat-related illness.
- Prolonged periods of hot weather coincide with sports days, educational visits, outdoor worship, forest school or other outdoor activities.

Signs of Heat-Related Illness

Staff should be alert to signs of dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke, including:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Excessive sweating
- Thirst
- Fatigue or unusual tiredness
- Nausea
- Confusion or disorientation

Any child or adult showing signs of heat-related illness should be moved to a cool area, provided with water and appropriate first aid. Emergency medical assistance should be sought immediately where heatstroke is suspected.

School Closure

School closure due solely to high temperatures would be exceptional. Decisions would be based upon a risk assessment of the school environment, the ability to maintain safe learning conditions, official advice from the Local Authority and emergency services, and the welfare of pupils and staff. Any decision to close, partially close, or amend the school day would be made by the Headteacher in consultation with governors where appropriate.

Electrical Storms, Flooding, and other Extreme Weather Conditions

The most likely weather conditions to cause disruption to school have been noted above, though other conditions may also cause threat to the safety of pupils and staff, whilst on site.

In the event of any such episode being forecast, action should be taken at the earliest possible convenience to limit disruption and preserve the safety of all concerned.

In the unlikely event of any unforeseen weather event such as **flash-flooding, electrical storms**, occurring whilst staff and pupils are on site, then evacuation procedures as noted in the '**Critical Incident Policy**' should be adhered to. All staff should be familiar with these procedures, and they should be displayed on site for visitors to see.

Winter Gritting

The school recognizes that it has a responsibility to provide employees, pupils and others who enter the premises with a safe environment in which to work and learn.

The school is committed to complying with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other regulations that require, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe means of access to and egress from the premises.

Hazard

During the winter the risk of injury from slips, trips and falls is increased by the presence of snow and ice, especially at the start of the school day, on foot paths and other areas of pedestrian traffic.

Persons Affected

All staff, visitors and pupils.

Risk Rating

Medium – risk of frequent slips and trips resulting in minor injury or occasional risk of major injury.

Winter Gritting Procedure

The school will take the following steps to ensure safe access and egress during inclement weather, when the risk of injury from slip and trip accidents is increased due to snow and ice.

- The school will treat access routes to the school site and priority areas the night before if there is good reason to believe that local conditions would otherwise be hazardous due to snow and ice. It is acknowledged that the school will not always know beforehand on all occasions.
- That the Site Team will clear, and grit access routes and priority areas identified below as soon as possible on the morning of inclement weather. This will occur, if reasonably practicable, before the arrival of other staff and pupils and keep records of the time and date that they have gritted.
- During the school day further applications of grit will be applied when required to ensure safe egress from the site at the end of the school day and again records will be kept.
- Whilst every effort will be made to clear snow and ice it must be remembered that individuals have a responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This means being aware of the potential hazards of walking or driving in icy conditions and acting reasonably in the circumstances.

Priority access routes for winter gritting will be:

1. Drop off area paths in front of school
2. Route from the gate round onto the playground, if the playground is in use.
3. Pathways around school used by parents, staff and children

Other priority areas for winter gritting will be:

1. Staff car park and paths
2. Playground – such large areas are uneconomical to grit so access to these areas would be prohibited.

Closure of School

The decision to close school would be for the on-site SLT team using advice from those on site, LA advice and MET office warnings.

Early closure or full closure decisions to be made by SLT in conjunction with the Chair of Governors and parents advised by school email and social media platforms as soon as possible.