INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

St George's CE Primary School

Date of issue	September 2026
Policy owner	Executive Headteacher / Governing Body
Approved by	Governing Body
Date approved	_____
Review frequency	In accordance with the Policy Review Schedule
Next review	September 2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors during severe or inclement weather, and to make clear the arrangements for keeping the school open, restricting attendance, closing temporarily and reopening safely.

St George's CE Primary School will seek to remain open and provide face-to-face education wherever it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so. A full or partial closure will only be used where local conditions mean that opening safely is not possible.

2. Scope and definition

Inclement or severe weather may include snow, ice, flooding, storms, high winds, fog, extreme heat or other weather conditions that create significant risks to safe travel, safe access to the site, the school building or the school's ability to operate safely.

The school will take account of local conditions and relevant advice or warnings from the Met Office, Salford City Council, emergency services, transport providers and central government where appropriate.

3. Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors are paramount.
- The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open and enable as many pupils as possible to attend safely.
- The decision to close unexpectedly is made by the school. In line with Salford City Council guidance, closure will be avoided unless it is necessary.
- Decisions will be based on a proportionate risk assessment of the actual conditions affecting St George's and the local area rather than weather forecasts alone.
- Where the school has to close temporarily, it will seek to reopen as soon as it is safe and practicable.
- The school may consider a delayed opening, early closure, partial opening or restriction of attendance where this is a safer and more proportionate response than full closure.

4. Responsibility for the decision

The Executive Headteacher has overall responsibility for deciding whether the school should remain open, open later, close earlier, restrict attendance, partially close or close completely because of severe weather or an associated emergency. The Head of School may act on behalf of the Executive Headteacher where appropriate.

Where practicable, the decision will be informed by consultation with relevant senior leaders and site staff and will take account of information available from Salford City Council and other relevant agencies.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of a significant or prolonged closure.

5. Factors considered when making a decision

A dynamic risk assessment will be undertaken. Factors may include:

- whether pupils and staff can travel to and from school safely;
- the condition of roads, pavements and public transport in the local area;
- Met Office weather warnings and advice from Salford City Council or emergency services;
- the safety of entrances, pathways, playgrounds and external areas;
- whether sufficient safe pedestrian access can be maintained;
- the condition and temperature of the school building;
- heating, lighting, water, electricity and other essential services;
- the availability of sufficient staff to supervise pupils safely and meet safeguarding, first-aid and other essential needs;
- whether catering and other essential services can operate;

- the needs of pupils who may be particularly vulnerable to the conditions;
- whether conditions are expected to improve or deteriorate during the school day.

6. Communication with Salford City Council and families

Salford City Council states that each school has its own procedures for notifying parents of a closure, that the decision to close unexpectedly is made by the school, and that schools should seek to avoid closure unless it is absolutely necessary. The council also provides a School and Education Setting Closures page which schools can update with closure information.

Where the school closes or changes its normal opening arrangements:

- parents and carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable using the school's normal communication systems, including ClassDojo;
- staff will be informed through the school's agreed staff communication arrangements;
- the school will update Salford City Council's school and education setting closure information where required/available;
- the school website and/or other established communication channels may be updated where appropriate;
- messages will make clear whether the school is fully closed, partially open, opening late or closing early and, where possible, when the next update will be provided.

The school will not rely on outdated named radio stations, individual council officers or historic telephone/email contacts contained in earlier versions of this policy. Current Salford City Council channels will be used.

7. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are responsible for making their own assessment of the safety of their individual journey to school and should:

- ensure that the school holds up-to-date emergency contact information;
- check ClassDojo and other school communications during periods of severe weather;
- inform school promptly if their child cannot attend because local conditions make travel unsafe;
- follow any instructions about altered entrances, opening times, clothing or collection arrangements;
- avoid contacting school repeatedly for updates where information has already been issued, so that telephone lines remain available for urgent matters.

8. Staff

Staff should make reasonable efforts to attend work where it is safe to do so, taking account of their individual journey and prevailing travel conditions. Staff must not place themselves at unreasonable risk.

- Staff should keep their contact details up to date.
- Staff should follow instructions issued by the Executive Headteacher or designated senior leader.
- If a member of staff is unable to attend or expects significant delay because of severe weather, they must contact the school in accordance with the normal absence/reporting procedure as soon as possible.
- Staff who are able to attend may be asked to work flexibly to enable the school to operate safely.

9. Site preparation and gritting

The Site Officer will, so far as reasonably practicable:

- monitor weather forecasts when severe conditions are expected;
- check the heating system and essential building services;
- maintain an appropriate stock of rock salt/grit and suitable equipment;
- prioritise and treat designated pedestrian routes, entrances and other essential access areas;
- check entrance matting and internal floors to reduce slip risks;
- identify and isolate areas that cannot be made safe;

- continue to inspect and maintain treated routes while conditions persist;
- report significant hazards or building/service failures promptly to the Executive Headteacher or designated senior leader.

It is not normally practicable to clear or grit every part of the school site. Safe designated routes will therefore be prioritised and pupils, staff and visitors will be expected to use them.

10. Opening, partial opening and reopening

Before opening or reopening, the Executive Headteacher or designated senior leader will consider whether the site can operate safely. This will include, as appropriate:

- safe access to and from the building;
- heating and essential utilities;
- slip, ice, snow, flooding or wind-related hazards;
- staffing and safe supervision levels;
- first-aid and safeguarding arrangements;
- the safety of playgrounds and outdoor areas;
- catering and welfare arrangements;
- whether a delayed start, partial opening or temporary restriction of attendance would reduce risk.

Where only part of the site is safe or staffing is significantly reduced, the school may use only safe areas of the building or make temporary operational adjustments. Any restriction of attendance will be kept to the minimum necessary and reviewed regularly.

11. During the school day

If conditions deteriorate after pupils have arrived, the school will monitor the situation and may adjust activities, restrict use of outdoor areas or, where necessary, arrange an early closure.

Parents and carers will be given as much notice as circumstances allow. Pupils will not simply be sent home. Normal safeguarding and collection arrangements will apply, and pupils will remain appropriately supervised until collected or until another agreed safe arrangement is in place.

12. Attendance during severe weather

Where the school remains open, attendance will be recorded in the normal way and the most appropriate statutory attendance code will be used for any pupil who is absent.

Under the current attendance coding framework, examples that may be relevant to severe weather or an emergency include:

- Y2 – unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency;
- Y3 – unable to attend because part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil cannot practicably be accommodated elsewhere on site;
- Y4 – unable to attend because the whole school is unexpectedly closed when it was due to meet for a session;
- Y7 – unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause, where the statutory conditions for that code are met.

Attendance codes will be applied according to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Department for Education attendance guidance.

13. Remote education

Face-to-face education remains the priority. If the school has to close temporarily or restrict attendance because it cannot open safely, the school will consider providing remote education where appropriate and practicable.

Remote education does not change the requirement to use the correct attendance code. Pupils receiving remote education while absent from school must still be recorded in accordance with the statutory attendance regulations.

14. Extreme heat

Extreme heat is included within the Department for Education's definition of severe weather. Closure is not an automatic response to hot weather. The school will first consider reasonable adaptations to keep pupils and staff safe and comfortable, which may include:

- increased access to drinking water and hydration breaks;
- using cooler or shaded areas of the school;
- adapting PE, outdoor activities and the timing of activities;
- relaxing uniform expectations where appropriate;
- increasing ventilation or using other safe cooling measures;
- making reasonable adjustments for pupils and staff who are particularly vulnerable to heat.

If conditions cannot be managed safely, the Executive Headteacher may consider temporary closure or restriction of attendance following a risk assessment.

15. Snow and ice

During snow and icy conditions, designated pedestrian routes will be prioritised for treatment. Outdoor play, PE or other activities may be adapted or cancelled where surfaces are unsafe.

Parents and carers may be advised to ensure children wear suitable warm clothing and footwear. The school may temporarily alter access arrangements to direct everyone to the safest entrance.

16. Review following a closure

Following a significant weather-related closure or disruption, the Executive Headteacher and relevant staff will review the effectiveness of the response, including communication, site arrangements, staffing and any lessons identified. Procedures will be amended where necessary.

17. Related policies and plans

- Health & Safety Policy
- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Emergency / Critical Incident procedures
- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements
- Educational Visits procedures
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy

18. Key guidance

- Salford City Council – School and education setting closures.
- Department for Education – Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings.
- Department for Education – Working together to improve school attendance.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Met Office severe weather warnings and relevant local emergency advice.