Adverse Weather Policy

Policy date: November 2026

Next review: November 2028

Headteacher – Melissa Lawrenson

Review cycle: Every two years, or sooner following changes to guidance, a significant incident or changes to school arrangements.

1. Purpose

Eaves Primary School aims to remain open whenever it is safe to do so. This policy explains how we respond to snow, ice, storms, flooding, extreme temperatures and other severe weather, while protecting children, staff and visitors.

2. Decisions about opening and closure

The Headteacher will assess whether the school can operate safely, taking account of the site, weather warnings, travel conditions, staffing, heating, water, power, emergency access, school meals and catering arrangements, and the needs of pupils. Where practicable, the Headteacher will consult the Chair of Governors before deciding to close and will liaise with the local authority or other services as appropriate. A decision may include opening as normal, delayed opening, restricting access to part of the site, early closure or full closure. Closure will be used only when safe operation is not reasonably possible.

3. Preparing for winter weather

The Headteacher and site staff will review weather forecasts and the school's Winter Maintenance Risk Assessment. Suitable supplies of grit or salt and snow-clearance equipment will be available. Priority will be given to safe pedestrian routes, entrances, emergency exits, emergency vehicle access and assembly points. Staff undertaking gritting or snow clearance must use appropriate equipment, footwear and protective clothing and follow safe manual-handling arrangements.

4. Managing the school site

Snow, ice and frost will be treated or removed as soon as reasonably practicable, especially before arrival and collection. Routes will be checked again after treatment and throughout the day if conditions change. Unsafe areas will be cordoned off, signed or closed until they can be made safe.

Drainage problems, leaking gutters and damaged surfaces will be reported for repair. The school cannot guarantee that every outdoor surface will be free of ice at all times.

5. Arriving at and leaving school

Parents and carers should follow school messages and use only designated, open entrances and paths. Children should wear suitable footwear and warm or weather-appropriate clothing. Families should take particular care on roads and pavements outside school, which may be outside the school's control. If travel is unsafe, parents should contact the school as soon as possible; absence will be recorded in line with the Attendance Policy and applicable guidance.

6. Communication with families and staff

The school will share decisions as early as reasonably possible using its normal parent communication channels and, where appropriate, the school website. Families should check for updates rather than assume that closure on one day means closure the next. Staff will be informed of reporting arrangements and should notify the Headteacher promptly if severe weather affects their ability to travel safely.

7. During the school day

Leaders will monitor changing conditions and adjust outdoor play, PE, visits and access arrangements where necessary. Indoor spaces will be used if playgrounds are unsafe. Extra consideration will be given to younger pupils, children with SEND, medical needs or mobility difficulties, and anyone needing support to move or evacuate safely. If conditions deteriorate, the Headteacher may arrange an early closure. No child will be sent home without the knowledge of their parent or carer and an agreed safe collection arrangement with a parent or authorised adult.

8. Breakfast Club, Care Club and school visits

The school will consider separately whether Breakfast Club, Care Club, outdoor activities and educational visits can operate safely. Parents will be told promptly if arrangements change. Decisions about trips will follow the Educational Visits Policy and relevant risk assessments.

9. Other adverse conditions

For high winds, staff will check for unsafe trees, loose objects and damaged structures and restrict access where needed. During flooding, affected areas will be isolated and electrical or contamination risks assessed. In extreme heat, staff will consider shade, drinking water, ventilation and adjustments to outdoor activity. Where heating, power, water or sanitation fails, leaders will assess whether safe supervision and essential facilities can be maintained.

10. Learning during an extended closure

If the school is closed for more than a short period, leaders will consider suitable learning activities that children can complete at home. Activities will be appropriate to pupils' ages and needs, including SEND, and will take account of families' access to devices and the internet. The school will explain arrangements to families through its usual communication channels.

11. Responsibilities and review

The Headteacher makes operational decisions and coordinates communication. Site staff carry out agreed checks and maintenance within their training and competence. All staff report hazards promptly, supervise pupils appropriately and follow any temporary safety arrangements. Governors oversee the policy and seek assurance that risks are managed. This policy will be reviewed annually and following significant incidents or changes to guidance.

Approval and review

Approved by governing body: _____ Date: _____

Headteacher: Mrs Melissa Lawrenson Review due: Autumn 2027