



St. Paulinus Catholic Primary School



"Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus."

(I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." *cf* John 8:12)

School Closure Policy

Policy reviewed by Subject Managers : Mrs. R. d'Arcy
Policy updated by : Miss E. Sinclair, May 2018
Policy review date : May 2021

Signed Date
Headteacher

Temple Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF13 3QE

'An outstanding school, which is deeply committed to the Catholic mission... this school inspires all within this faith community to live life to the full.' Ofsted 2017

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School Closure Policy

Mission Statement

"Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus"

As the owner of the premises, the school will have a duty of care under the Occupier's Liability Act 1957. This duty is a 'common duty of care' and is set out under section 2 of the Act.

Duty

The duty is to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the 'visitor' will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which the 'visitor' is invited or permitted by the occupier to be there. The term 'visitor' includes all pupils, staff, parents and others with access invited or permitted by the school.

Treatment of Paths

Should be made as clear as possible. A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine the paths that should be cleared immediately and the ones that may be left until later.

The approved code of practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations state that "arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes ..."

It is a popular misconception that an occupier cannot be held liable for failing to clear snow / ice, but can be held liable once an attempt at clearance has been made and then someone is injured. The true position is that an occupier can be held liable for 'failing to act reasonably' in order to prevent accidents.

With this in mind it may be necessary for some entrances / areas to be temporarily closed, by taping off areas that continue to be a slip hazard as long as management have given consideration to the maintenance of emergency escape routes. This information should be communicated to staff and parents / carers as soon as possible.

Other Areas

In addition to pathways / agreed access areas, in all cases access pathways should be cleared from parking spaces provided for the disabled, adjacent to premises entrances.

Please note that whilst it is not appropriate for staff to clear or grit areas falling outside the premises boundary, eg. pavements / public footpaths, roads forming part of the public highway, staff employed on snow clearance should consider clearing the immediate footway and access points to the premises. If these areas are considered particularly dangerous the Caretaker should contact Highways Maintenance Services.



When to Grit / Salt

- Whenever there is a risk of air temperatures dropping sufficiently to create ice / freezing conditions.
- A good indication of these conditions is when the Council's Highways vehicles are out gritting / salting the roads. Also check local weather reports.
- To minimise risk from snow and ice as well as gritting and snow clearing consider closure of some routes, particularly outside stairs, ladders and walkways on roofs.
- Remember even weak sun will melt ice and assist the process.
- Pay special attention to areas that are shaded, as they may not thaw out during daylight hours.
- Once an area has been gritted / salted, it should continue to be treated on a regular basis until the risk of ice has passed.
- To gain the most economical and environmental solution the minimum amount of salt should be used, as a guide a good handful is sufficient to treat 1m².
- There is no advantage in gritting / salting deep snow; this should be cleared from the path first.

All Staff

Staff are responsible for safeguarding their own and colleague's health and safety in bad weather. Staff should also wear footwear / clothing appropriate to the conditions.

Risk Assessment

The Headteacher and Caretaker must ensure that a risk assessment is in place, which covers the hazards associated with snow and ice on their premises.

As a guide the following recommendations should be in place. The Headteacher, Bursar or Caretaker is responsible for reviewing and revising the arrangements as determined by their local risk assessment. Staff should be aware of their duties and responsibilities. It may be necessary for site staff to start work earlier on a particular day to commence a gritting plan.

- Adequate equipment available (including salt / grit, rock salt for de-icing).
- Determine which access routes are the most used / important.
- Clear a path 1 metre wide from the site entrance to the main building entrance. Pathways leading from car parks to entrances, slopes and steps on route should be regarded as a priority.
- Treat cleared paths with salt / grit to maintain a clear pathway especially where temperatures remain below freezing.
- As time permits, other pathways to entrances and between buildings should be cleared and gritted.
- Appropriate checks to be made to ensure continued safety.
- Identify any particularly dangerous areas which require extra care and should be checked / treated more frequently, eg. steps / slopes.
- Consider the needs of any visitors with particular needs (elderly, disabled, etc).



Where the Headteacher, Bursar or Caretaker has concerns over the safety of certain external pathways, playgrounds, etc., it may be appropriate for affected areas to be taken out of use. If this is the case this must be marked clearly using signs / cones / tape to ensure everyone is made aware.

If playgrounds remain in use, supervision levels may need to be increased.

Method of Clearance

A pathway of at least one metre wide should be cleared, this will allow suitable access for pedestrians and pushchairs. Snow and ice should be completely removed using a suitable snow scraper or shovel. Once the path has been cleared rock salt should be used to assist in providing extra grip. During exceptional periods a mix of rock salt and sharp sand should be used.

Paths should 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 (eg. steep pathways, car parks, steps) to avoid risks to staff, pupils or visitors.

Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit, but generally it is suggested that attempts are not made to clear car parking areas / spaces themselves, unless snow is so heavy that essential vehicles (eg. emergency vehicles, delivery lorries, etc) are unable to gain access to the site.

All persons clearing snow should be provided with suitable snow scrapers, shovels, rock salt / sharp sand, protective gloves, footwear and clothing (ie. high visibility vests). Staff should take regular breaks from the task.

Procedure

- School entrances and paths will be cleared of snow, gritted and salted as seems necessary at the time. Priority will be given to the entrances and the pathways leading into St. Paulinus Catholic Primary School.

If snow has fallen during the night, the clearance operation will start as soon as the Caretaker arrive. When snow falls during daytime hours, the Caretaker will take action to grit and salt the main paths as described above.

- The school will ensure that adequate supplies of salt and grit are available.
- Snow shovels and brooms will be used for clearing the snow wherever possible.
- The Headteacher, Bursar and Caretaker will monitor the weather conditions throughout the year and particularly at times when snow and/or ice are forecast, and they will ensure that the website is regularly updated when notification is needed of conditions at school. Pupils will be advised not to come into school in conditions when travel seems unwise.
- The Caretaker will be alert to the need for additional matting at entrances to buildings, and additional matting will be laid as needed.
- A record of the areas gritted and salted will be kept by the Caretaker.
- Any accidents or near misses will be reported and documented in the Bursary.



Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed following the 3-year Policy Review Cycle of the school or when there are significant changes to the curriculum that warrant it. It may also be reviewed earlier should it no longer comply with school practice or the legal requirements of schools.