



VENERABLE EDWARD MORGAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SNOW and BAD WEATHER POLICY

This Document is a statement of intent within Venerable Edward Morgan. It was developed through a process of consultation with Key stakeholders and in correspondence with the School's planning and review schedule.

This sets out a framework by which to work.

Approved On:	September 2024
Next Review:	Autumn 2025
Signed:	Cllr D L Mackie

Learn, believe, achieve together
Dysgwch, credwch, cyflawnwch gyda'ch gilydd

Venerable Edward Morgan Catholic Primary

Snow/Inclement Weather Closure Policy

Rationale

We will always do everything to remain open during snow weather; however the safety and wellbeing of our children and staff are of utmost importance to us.

Before making the decision to close, the headteacher undertakes a rigorous risk assessment to decide if there is significant risk of severe injury, ill health or inability to comply with relevant legislation. The decision is taken on the basis of the following considerations:

- Have the Emergency Services or Local Government advised against travel?
- Can enough staff members make their way, safely, to be able to provide a proper educational environment, including first aiders and provision required for children with Additional Needs?
- Can the school provide lunch for the children?
- Can the school grounds be sufficiently clear of snow/ice to be safe for access?
- Does the school have heating to the legally required temperature across the whole site?
- Does the school have lighting and hot water across the whole site?

We will also take account of local and national weather forecasts and may base our decision to close or to remain closed during a prolonged snowy spell on these.

Snowfall overnight

If there is heavy snowfall overnight we will:

- aim to make a decision to open or close by 7:30am;
- notify parents/carers via
 - Twitter
 - Flintshire County Council website
 - School Comms-text messaging and e-mail
 - School website
 - Our Schools App
- If possible, put a sign on the school gates saying the school is closed

Snowfall during the school day

If there is heavy snowfall during the school day, we will:

- monitor the depth and rate of snowfall until it becomes apparent that conditions are likely to become unsafe for all concerned on their journeys to and from the school;
- contact parents via text, email and website to advise them that the school will close early;
- keep the children in school until they are picked up;
- only allow children to be collected by parent/carer or elected collector;
- supervise children until their parents/carers arrive;
- invite members of staff who live in vulnerable geographical areas to go home at the safest opportunity.

Safety on-site

In the event of heavy snowfall the site manager/caretaker will try to ensure the main pedestrian pathways are cleared and gritted. All foot traffic will use only these paths until other pedestrian paths can be made safe. However, completion of snow clearance will be subject to the quantity of snow fallen, the availability of other support e.g. grounds maintenance/Flintshire 'Streetscene' operatives and prevailing and expected weather conditions.

Snow play

We understand the enjoyment that snow brings and believe that children should be allowed to play outside during snowy conditions, as long as school safety guidelines are followed. The headteacher will decide whether to allow the children to play outside during snowy weather and will arrange for extra supervision on the school field where necessary

- The tarmacked playgrounds will be out of bounds during break times until the snow/ice has thawed or sufficient grit has been laid;
- Children may throw snowballs but they must not throw them at other pupils or members of staff;
- Children must not throw ice balls or make “slides” in the snow or ice on the playground;
- Children must be dressed warmly. Please send your child to school with warm, waterproof clothing and Wellington boots.

Planning ahead

Please ensure that we have your current mobile/landline telephone number on our system. If you are having difficulty getting to school to pick up your child and you will be late, please call us to let us know. We will be able to reassure your child that you are on your way.

If your child normally travels home alone after school and because of the bad weather you want them to wait to be collected, please contact school as soon as possible so that we can get a message to your child and their class teacher before home time.

Information for drivers –

Some of the local roads are particularly difficult to negotiate safely in the snow. If you MUST drive to the school in the snow then the following advice should be adhered to:

- Do not attempt to drive into the school’s car park.
- Be mindful where you park as you could be creating serious danger to pedestrians/other motorists.

Pupil attendance during adverse weather

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal.

Parents should contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be significantly delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents should inform the school of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risks their child being registered as an un-authorised absence.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence

Staff attendance during adverse weather

Despite closure to pupils, staff still have a duty to attend the school if they possibly can or are instructed otherwise e.g. the Headteacher may direct staff to work from home instead.

Staff are responsible for getting to work safely and each person must ultimately make his or her own assessment of the day’s weather conditions and the risk that may pose.

These expectations in no way compel staff to put themselves at risk by travelling in severe weather conditions. (See further guidance for staff below)

Adverse Weather Policy-Further guidance for staff

Where employees anticipate or experience difficulty in travelling to work due to adverse weather conditions (e.g. heavy snowfall) and are unable to reach their workplace by their normal start time they must telephone their workplace as early as possible on that day to advise their manager of the situation.

If they are unable to attend their normal workplace, their manager may make arrangements for them if possible, to work from home.

Employees will be credited with a normal day's pay.

Managers need to be aware that employees with certain disabilities and/or physical or health conditions may find it more difficult, or be unable, to attend work when the weather is bad and in these circumstances longer term arrangements should be planned.

The Reasonable Adjustments Guide for Managers covers this in more detail and recommends that arrangements (such as working from home where possible) should be planned well before the winter months.

In periods of adverse weather the priority for all managers should be the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff. In addition, extra care and precautions should be taken where colleagues have a disability or condition, that makes mobility more difficult in adverse weather, or when normal travel is disrupted.