

# INSPIRE - ENABLE - ACHIEVE



## The Vale Federation Adverse Weather Policy

This policy was reviewed in

October 2022

The policy is to be reviewed by

October 2023

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Zi', is written over a horizontal line.

Co-Principal

Date: 17/11/2022

## **Contents:**

### [Statement of intent](#)

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [School closure](#)
4. [Remaining open in adverse weather conditions](#)
5. [Procedures for gritting](#)
6. [Health and safety](#)
7. [Attendance](#)
8. [Exam disruption](#)
9. [Clothing](#)
10. [Emergency plan](#)
11. [Monitoring and review](#)

## **Statement of intent**

It is the aim of The Vale Federation to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- Make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- Advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

## **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and UK Health Security Agency (2022) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UK Health Security Agency and NHS England (2022) 'Heatwave Plan for England'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- School Uniform Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The Co-Principal is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether pupils should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety

The Business Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment.
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of grit salt.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring staff have received appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy, and ensuring staff act in accordance with this policy.

The site operations supervisor is responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the Business Director of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Co-Principal.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.
- Liaising with one another before the end of the day to discuss an exit plan for pupils, this includes escorting younger pupils to the entrance to be collected by their parents.
- Modelling good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Encouraging pupils to stay appropriate hydrated.

Parents are responsible for:

- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Following the School Uniform Policy.
- Following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.
- Attending school prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Following the Behaviour Policy at all times.

### **3. School closure**

The decision to close the school will be made by the Co-Principal and the Business Director. The chair of governors will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the Co-Principal, the deputy Head of School will assume the responsibility of the Co-Principal in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- The Co-Principal will inform staff and parents via SMS text message or telephone.
- The Business Director or marketing officer will post an update on the school website.
- The site operations supervisor will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via SMS text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration with the Co-Principal and Business Director. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of pupils.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

#### **4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions**

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only and all pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

The site operations supervisor will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site, if there are any, and a notice will be erected to inform vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds that they do so at their own risk.

At the Co-Principal's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and staff.

All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

#### **5. Procedures for gritting**

The first phase of gritting will prioritise those areas which are most used by pupils and staff. This includes the main entrance of the school, as well as the following areas:

- Booker Park School – pavement walkways around the front building perimeter, including the top car park access walkway to the main building reception and CLD top entrance door pathway
- Stocklake Park School – walkway from the lower car park up to the main reception entrance
- Harding House – pavement walkways around the building entrance

The second phase of gritting will include areas that are not covered by phase one, but are likely to be used. These include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Booker Park School – entrance pathway along Stoke Leys Close up to the school driveway crossing points
- Stocklake Park School – top access security gate walkway to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Building and the site office
- Harding House – entrance car park

The Business Director decides which areas of the school are designated 'first phase' and 'second phase' for gritting.

The site operations supervisor ensures that the correct areas have been gritted and are safe for pupils and staff. Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted are clearly marked or cordoned off, so that pupils do not enter them.

The site operations supervisor ensures that the relevant equipment is used during gritting, any damaged equipment is reported to the Business Director so that it can be replaced.

The supply of grit salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the Business Director is notified.

A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting. This record is passed on to the Business Director.

## **6. Health and safety**

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The Co-Principal and Business Director are responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds. Staff members must take responsibility for the health and safety of any pupils under their supervision.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the appropriate risk assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the Co-Principal or Business Director so the site can be reassessed.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the site operations supervisor in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the Business Director will be informed of the outcome at 7.00am. The Business Director will inform the Co-Principal.

Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

The school is committed to ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of pupils. To minimise the risk of ill health during adverse temperatures, the school will:

- Encourage staff and pupils to keep as much of their skin as possible covered up during the Summer months and wearing appropriate clothing during the Winter months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) 15 with UVA protection on any part of the body that they cannot cover up during the Summer months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Reschedule work/outdoor lessons according to the outdoor temperature.
- Situate water points and rest areas in the shade during hot temperatures.
- Encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.

- Encourage staff and pupils to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

Relevant staff members will be made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions.

Where a pupil is suffering from heat illness, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- Moving the pupil to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
- Cooling the pupil as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool (25 to 30c) water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, using a fan.
- Where the pupil does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called.
- If the pupil loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the pupil will continue until the ambulance arrives.

## **7. Attendance**

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is registered as authorised.

When a pupil cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the Co-Principal believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed, without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevent the child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the Co-Principal or Business Director to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff:

- No maximum class size limits are set out.

The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

## **8. Exam disruption**



If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

The school takes full responsibility for informing parents and pupils of any agreed changes concerning exams in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

## **9. Clothing**

During the Summer months, when temperatures reach above 25 degrees Celsius (°C), everyone working at or attending the school will be encouraged to protect their face, neck and ears using a sun-safe hat with a wide brim. Baseball caps or visors are not considered sun-safe hats.

Pupils without sun-safe hats will only be permitted to play in an area protected from the sun, unless a sun-safe hat has been provided. Pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be required to play in an area protected from the sun, if spare clothing cannot be provided.

During the Winter months, pupils are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

## **10. Emergency plan**

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the First Aid Policy.

The emergency plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parent contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move pupils to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort children.
- Contact parents.
- Deal with any media interest.

Each member of staff will have electronic access to the emergency plan in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

All parents will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, for instance, their duty to collect children.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Co-Principal, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

This policy will be reviewed annually.