



**ESHER CHURCH SCHOOL**

*Christ at the Centre; Life to the Full*

# Snow and Adverse Weather Procedure

**Ratified:** January 2017

**Reviewed:** January 2021

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*Our Vision:*

*To be a safe, happy, loving community; where excellent teaching inspires children to learn and explore, care for each other and believe that they can make a difference.*

It is the policy of the school to make every effort to remain open whenever possible as long as it is safe to do so.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Headteacher.

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

- A sufficient number of staff are unable to come in to keep the school running safely. We may close some classes due to staff shortages but keep others open in order to maintain a safe adult/child ratio in school.
- Conditions on site are dangerous or in breach of health and safety regulations
- Conditions are considered to be, or are anticipated to later become, too hazardous for travel
- There are issues with heating the school building appropriately or other essential supplies or services are not available. If food deliveries are unavailable we may still give the option for children to come into school with a packed lunch rather than closing the school.

If the decision is made for the school to close:

1. The closure, and the reason for it, will be recorded on the school website, [www.esherchurchschool.org.uk](http://www.esherchurchschool.org.uk), as early as is possible.
2. Staff will be informed on site (if applicable) or via First Class, Parentmail and by use of a telephone tree.
3. The school will alert all parents to the closure using the Parentmail e-mail service.
4. The school will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed about a possible closure during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the associated uncertainty pose considerable difficulties for some parents. Parents are expected to check the website and their messages when it is clear that closure is a possibility. This must be done prior to phoning the school as, in these circumstances, it is likely that we will need to keep the phone lines clear.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school by e-mail ([office@esher.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:office@esher.surrey.sch.uk)) to let them know they are on their way if they believe they are likely to be delayed beyond 9:30am.

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 these exceptional circumstances as soon as possible as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case in order to formally authorise the absence to the Education Welfare Officer. 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 unauthorised absentee. Where the school is officially closed, all absence due to the weather is authorised.

In the event of the school having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by email and text message and asked to collect their child/ren. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances. All parents/carers are urged to ensure that mobile phones are always switched on and audible during episodes of adverse weather in case we are trying to contact them.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted by the caretaker or by members of the senior leadership team should the caretaker not be able to make it into school. We may ask for volunteers (via Parentmail) to come and support with this. Parents, children and visitors should be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this at school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children stick to the paths and do not slide on them before and after school opening hours. If snow is falling at drop off time, we ask that parents support us in encouraging the children not to play with it at this time, simply so that the snow has a chance to fall to a level where they can all enjoy it together at play time.

During significant adverse weather conditions where the school is still open, we may request that parents bring their children directly to the School Hall if there are insufficient staff in school to be in each classroom. In this case, the hall will be open from 8:15am for parents to bring their children inside. All parents should enter the school with their child directly by the front entrance, and report to the main hall with their child/ren. If the school is still open, Breakfast Club will run as normal in the Eden Building from 7:45am.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to parents and children at the beginning and end of school, and if the Headteacher decides it necessary, at break times as well. However, it is much more likely in snowy conditions that we will extend playtimes to give the children (and staff) the rare opportunity to play in the snow. **It is therefore important that children come to school with wellington boots/snow boots, with their school shoes in a carrier bag, and appropriate outerwear including a hat and gloves so that they can be allowed outside. Spare socks are especially useful to have in school in snowy weather.**

In the Headteacher's absence the Deputy Head will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to adverse weather conditions.