



DOWNSVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

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Review: Annually or as required following a significant extreme weather event or change in guidance/legislation

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The school recognises that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change and is committed to taking a proactive and proportionate approach to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

AIMS

- Protect the safety, health and welfare of pupils, staff, visitors and contractors during extreme weather events (including heatwaves, cold snaps, severe wind/storms, flooding, heavy snow/ice, and prolonged severe air pollution).
- Provide a clear and practical framework for decision-making and communications before, during and after extreme weather.
- Minimise disruption to learning, pastoral care and school operations while ensuring statutory duties (safeguarding, health & safety, accessibility and inclusion) are met.
- Ensure equality of access and appropriate provision for pupils with SEND, medical needs, EAL and vulnerable groups.

SCOPE

- This Policy applies to all pupils, staff (permanent, supply, contractors), governors, volunteers, parents/carers and visitors on site or on school-led activities.
- Covers on-site activities, before and after school provision (wraparound care), and off-site trips/visits where the school is responsible.
- Covers all extreme weather types and combinations; includes severe weather forecasts and amber/red alerts.

LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS

This policy is based on the following guidance:

- Croydon Council Guidance: Guidelines on severe weather conditions and school closures
- Department for Education's Hot weather and heatwaves: guidance for schools and other education settings: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2026/06/hot-weather-and-heatwaves-guidance-for-schools-and-other-education-settings/>
- Department for Education guidance on emergency planning and response for education settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings>
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010 (reasonable adjustments for pupils with protected characteristics)
- DfE Keeping children safe in education (safeguarding obligations remain in emergencies)

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Health & Safety Policy
- Emergency Evacuation
- Business Continuity (Resilience) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Managing Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- SEND policy
- Attendance Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key roles and responsibilities:

- Governing Body
 - Approve policy
 - Ensure resources for implementation and monitoring
 - Review after incidents

- Headteacher (overall responsibility)
 - Authorise and lead decisions on partial/whole school closures, changes to opening times, evacuation/relocation and suspension of activities.
 - Ensure statutory safeguarding duties continue.
 - Communicate with LA, emergency services and Governors as appropriate.
 - The Extreme Weather Lead will be the Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher in their absence.
 - Keep parents informed of what is expected from them.

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - Implement actions, maintain situational awareness, coordinate staff deployment and welfare and ensure continuity of learning and pastoral support.
 - Ensure staff training and awareness for extreme-weather procedures.

- Site Manager
 - Prepare site risk assessments specific to weather types (e.g., heating systems, drainage, tree checks, roof integrity).
 - Ensure site preparations: grit/snow clearance, shuttering, sandbags, window securing, boiler servicing, water supplies and checks on pipes to avoid freezing.
 - Maintain emergency/critical equipment (first-aid, torches, bottled water, salt/grit, fans as policy allows).

- SENDCO / Inclusion Lead
 - Ensure reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, those with medical needs and key vulnerable pupils.
 - Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are updated for extreme weather scenarios.

- Class teachers and all staff
 - Ensure pupils are instructed on and follow all guidance provided with regards to clothing and hydration in extreme heat.
 - Report any concerns to SLT.

- Wraparound care staff (before/after school)
 - Apply the policy consistently; coordinate with school communications when changes are needed.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- Maintain up-to-date extreme-weather risk assessments that are specific to the school site.
- Annual review of risk assessments and after any extreme weather event.
- Include risk assessment and plans for: heatwave, heavy snow/ice, flooding, severe storms/high winds, prolonged air pollution, power failure combined with extreme temperatures.
- Ensure risk assessments explicitly reference pupils with SEND, medical conditions, EAL needs and vulnerable pupils.
- Educational visits and off-site activities will be reviewed and adapted, postponed or cancelled where extreme weather presents an unacceptable risk.

PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION

- Site maintenance and infrastructure
 - Regular servicing of boilers, heating, air conditioning and electrical systems
 - Ensure robust drainage and cleared gutters
 - Tree inspections and pruning programme
 - Adequate stocks of grit/salt for snow clearing
 - Freeze-protection of pipes: insulation, regular heating of vulnerable areas
- Learning continuity and safeguarding

- In the event of school closure digital learning contingency: remote learning, ready-to-deploy resources and guidance for staff and pupils.
 - Attendance and safeguarding: procedures for registering pupils on remote learning days
 - Continued welfare checks for vulnerable pupils.
 - Staff expectations for remote teaching and pastoral contact, if required.
- Welfare provision
 - Shade, water stations and cool spaces, as required.
 - First-aid kits checked, staff trained for heatstroke/hypothermia recognition and management
 - Communications
 - Staff awareness of extreme weather policy, plus targeted briefings before seasonal risk periods (winter, summer).
 - Communication cascade for staff, governors, parents and transport providers (email, text, school website and social media).
 - Pre-drafted templates for weather alerts, closures

Staff Welfare During Extreme Weather

- Reasonable adjustments will be considered for staff who are pregnant, have underlying health conditions or are otherwise vulnerable to extreme weather.
- Staff will be encouraged to take regular hydration/rest breaks during periods of extreme heat.
- During periods of severe weather, managers will monitor staff wellbeing and make adjustments where reasonably practicable.
- Staff should report any concerns regarding their health, travel or ability to work safely to their line manager as soon as possible.

ACTION PLANS BY WEATHER TYPE

Heatwave / high-temperature guidance

Follow UKHSA/Met Office heat-health alerts (amber/red)

Immediate actions

- Adjust uniform guidance temporarily (allow summer PE uniform / hat / sunscreen).
- Early and late sessions: consider altered timetable (start earlier, finish earlier) to avoid hottest hours if risk high.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity; modify PE and outdoor play (move indoors/shade).
- Ensure continuous access to drinking water; encourage fluid breaks.
- Close blinds/curtains on sun-facing windows; open windows at cooler times (early morning/after sunset).
- Provide cool, shaded outdoor spaces and limit movement between buildings during peak heat.

Inclusion Considerations

- Monitor pupils and staff for signs of heat exhaustion/stroke; first-aiders ready.
- Ensure pupils on medication susceptible to heat are monitored and adjustments made.
- Consider pupils without adequate clothing or sun protection and provide school supplies.
- Particular consideration will be given to pregnant staff, pupils and visitors, and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary.

Cold snap / prolonged low temperatures / snow/ice

Met Office warnings, local road conditions, site freeze risk

Immediate actions

- Ensure heating systems are functioning; identify and move pupils from poorly heated rooms.
- Reduce outdoor break times; limit outdoor physical activity.
- Implement gritting and snow clearance for entrances, paths and playgrounds; signage for icy areas.
- Consider delayed start or partial closure where travel / site safety compromised.

Inclusion Considerations

- Prioritise vulnerable pupils for phone check-ins for pupils who miss school.
- Ensure adequate clothing reminders to parents; provide spare warm clothing for pupils in need.
- Monitor medical conditions affected by weather changes, e.g. Asthma.

Flooding / severe rain

Environment Agency/LA flood alerts, site drainage failure

Immediate actions

- Immediate site safety checks; avoid electrical equipment in water-affected areas.
- Evacuate and relocate pupils to safe areas if required
- Consider moving to a relocation venue if needed.
- Restrict access to flooded external areas and adjacent roads
- Notify parents of pick-up plans.

Post-event

- Arrange building inspections, PAT testing and cleaning before reoccupation.
- Liaise with LA and insurance providers as required.

High winds / storms

Met Office warnings; observed hazards (fallen branches).

Immediate actions

- Secure loose outdoor equipment and signage; bring in outdoor furniture.
- Restrict movement around the site, particularly near glass, fencing or tall trees.
- Consider early dismissal only if safe travel routes are available.

Thunderstorms/Lightning

Immediate actions:

- Outdoor activities will cease immediately if thunder or lightning is observed.
- Pupils, staff and visitors will move indoors promptly.
- Outdoor areas and equipment will not be used until 30 minutes after the last observed thunder or lightning strike.

Prolonged poor air quality (e.g. smoke)

Local air quality index (AQI) alert issued

Immediate actions

- Stop outdoor activities
- Keep windows/doors closed
- Provide medical advice for pupils with respiratory conditions and asthma; ensure inhalers are available.
- Consider temporary partial closure if the air quality is hazardous and cannot be mitigated on site.

Power outage / utility failure during extreme weather

Immediate actions

- Use emergency lighting, heating/cooling contingency plans and consider relocation if necessary.
- Maintain safeguarding and register procedures using paper backups (in Business Continuity Folder within Grab Bag in school office)
- Contact utility providers and LA.
- Communicate expectations with parents.

- In the event of loss of potable water supply, the school will assess whether safe operation can continue and may implement partial or full closure if adequate drinking water cannot be provided.

Decision-making, closure and partial opening

- Headteacher (or Deputy in their absence) to decide on delayed opening, early closure, full closure or partial closure after liaison with LA and relevant partners.
- Criteria to consider include:
 - Safety of pupils and staff travelling to/from school (roads, public transport).
 - Condition of school site (heating, power, flooding, structural damage).
 - Availability of adequate staff for safe operation.
 - Likely duration of event.

The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open. However, the Headteacher reserves the right to partially or fully close the school where risks cannot be adequately mitigated.

Communication and information management

- Communication with parents: text message, email, school website homepage banner, Class Dojo and social media channels.
- Internal: staff text message /phone cascade
- Provide clear messages: what the decision is, why, expected timings, pick-up arrangements and impact on wraparound care.
- Keep messages short, factual and repeated as information evolves.
- Contractors and visitors will be informed of any site restrictions or amended procedures resulting from extreme weather.

Safeguarding, attendance and vulnerable pupils

- Continue safeguarding responsibilities: DSL or Deputy must be contactable.
- Maintain supervision ratios and ensure alternative provision meets safeguarding standards.
- If school is closed, record absence codes according to DfE guidance and LA direction.
- Make welfare calls to pupils on the vulnerable list, pupils with SEND, looked-after pupils and those with safeguarding plans.

Remote learning and continuity of education

- Ensure remote learning provision is proportionate and accessible; prioritise continuity for key groups (KS2/KS1 as required).
- Provide paper packs for families without online access; ensure guidance for parents to support pupils.
- Expectations for staff: minimum daily contact, lessons/tasks and safeguarding checks.

Post weather event recovery and business continuity

- Site safety inspections (structural, electrical, gas, water) and cleaning before reopening, if required
- Immediate debrief with SLT and relevant staff
- Document lessons learned and update policies as required.
- Liaise with insurers and LA about damage, claims and recovery support.