

Severe Weather Policy

Debden CE Primary Academy

Reviewed by: Sarah Bailey	March 2026
Shared with staff:	March 2026
Shared with Governors:	March 2026
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The school will make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

1.2 The decision to close the school will be made by the Head Teacher. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply.

- 1) Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
- 2) Conditions on site are dangerous.
- 3) Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous to travel.

1.3 In the absence of the Head Teacher, decisions regarding opening and closure will be made by the Deputy Head Teacher.

2.0 In Preparation for Severe Weather

2.1 Parents will be informed of the expected poor weather via email, in order to make the most suitable travel arrangements, and to enable them to remain vigilant for further school updates.

2.2 The Head teacher will arrange for potentially hazardous outdoor areas to be gritted (salt is located in the outdoor store area). In their absence, the Deputy Head would carry out this role.

2.3 The admin team will ensure that there is an adequate amount of rock salt available.

3.0 In the Event of Heavy Snow/ Severe Weather Before the School Day Starts

3.1 Parents

3.1.1 If it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, the school fully appreciates that children may arrive later than usual. However, parents should endeavour to ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late.

3.1.2 If parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. (see para. 2.3.2)

3.2 The School

3.2.1 The Head Teacher will decide whether the school will open taking into account the conditions at the school and the ability of staff to get there.

This decision will be made in coordination with (and based on information from) the following colleagues:

- Ms Julia Bacon– Deputy Headteacher
- Mrs Sarah Cameron – lives in Debden village
- Miss Sarah Douglas- lives in Debden village
- Miss Heather Rowe – lives close to Debden village
- Mrs Jo Arundell/ Mrs Sally Dale – the administration staff, who assist with communication to parents and also live in relatively close proximity to the school.

3.2.2 If the Head Teacher decides the school will close, they will send a message (via the staff Whatsapp group) to staff advising them of the closure. The Headteacher will endeavour to make this decision as soon as possible (this should be before 7:45am) and parents will be updated by the admin team in the following ways:

- Email to parents
- Update on the school Facebook page
- Notification on the home page of the school website
- If any staff are able to reach the school, a board will be placed outside the school, advising of the closure.

The admin team will make contact with the bus company.

We will also make Essex County Council aware of the closure. Parents will be able to visit Essex County Council's homepage at www.essex.gov.uk and search for Emergency School Closures or click into the Education and Schools area, click Schools, click Dates and click Emergency Closures.

3.3 *Exceptional Circumstances*

3.3.1 The School recognises that there may be cases where families are “cut off” due to particular difficulties in the area in which they live.

3.3.2 In such cases parents should advise the administration team of their particular circumstances, so that the Head teacher is able to justify an authorised absence.

4.0 In the event of extreme weather during the school day

4.1 If there is extreme weather during the school day the Head Teacher will decide whether it is necessary to close the school.

4.2 The Office will contact parents by email and, if necessary telephone, and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible.

4.3 Verbal or written permission will be required from any parent whose child is to be collected by another adult. We cannot release children into the care of another adult without direct permission from the parent.

4.4 The Staff that live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity.

4.5 A skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected. - Normal lessons will be curtailed and the remaining pupils assembled in groups under the supervision of authorised members of staff to await collection.

4.6 If a parent requests that they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, the Head Teacher will decide how the absence will be recorded.

5.0 Wet Morning Breaks

5.1 The Head Teacher will decide if the weather is bad enough for a 'wet' break.

5.2 If a wet break is declared no children must be left unsupervised. One member of staff (Teacher or Teaching Assistant) should remain in the classroom to supervise break with all children remaining in their own classes.

6.0 Wet Lunchtimes

6.1 The Head Teacher, in consultation with the lunchtime supervisors, will decide if the weather is bad enough for a 'wet' lunchtime. (in the absence of the Head teacher, this decision can be made solely by the senior lunchtime supervisors).

6.2 If a 'wet' lunchtime is declared the Lunchtime Supervisors will supervise the children with the support of other school staff if necessary. No children must be left unsupervised.

6.3 Children should be sent to the following locations:

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children – The Ducklings and Minnows classrooms
- Year 3 and Year 4 children – The Frogs classroom and the library
- Year 5 and Year 6 children – The Dragonflies classroom and the adjoining breakout space.

6.4 As children are spread across a number of enclosed spaces during wet lunchtimes, a greater number of staff are generally required to safely supervise the children. Therefore, the teachers and leaders at Debden work flexibly together to support wet lunchtimes (generally taking a 30-minute break and supporting supervision for 30 minutes during the lunch hour).

7.0 Equality & Disability Access Implications

7.1 If there were to be any child in school with a disability or mobility impairment consideration will be given to their specific needs and any potential impact of the weather conditions on their ability to get to school and/or around the school site.

8.0 Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed once every two years by the Headteacher.
