



DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Snow and Severe Weather

September 2023

Reviewed & updated: September 2023 (Karly Barker)

Next review date: September 2024

Introduction

Severe weather, which could affect council staff buildings or schools, may include:

- Snow or prolonged very cold weather
- Very strong or gale force winds
- Very heavy rain leading to the potential for flooding
- Prolonged very hot weather

This guidance provides general advice in the event of any of these conditions. If a school has a particular concern they should contact

Health and Safety Team 020 8379 3223 Borough Control Centre 020 8379 1000

Notification of Severe Weather

The Borough's Emergency Planning Team receives notifications of expected adverse weather conditions, which may have an impact upon the area, from the Met Office. This information is disseminated to Council employees, premises and schools via email.

If the weather is predicted to be severe, the Chief Executive or the Director of Schools and Children's Services (SCS) or a designated deputy will provide advice on the Council's Website or via email as to whether staff are required to attend or if it is deemed unsafe for establishments to be open. The Director of SCS, or his designated deputy, will state whether, in his opinion, the weather is expected to be so severe that schools and other educational establishments should be shut.

If a decision is taken to recommend closure to all non-essential establishments within the Council, this advice will be relayed to Schools via the email communication network.

The decision to close any establishment should not be taken lightly but as a last resort and due to an unacceptable risk as determined by a risk assessment. This will, inevitably, vary between establishments.

Where at all possible, advanced warning will be given, particularly if the severe weather is likely to be prolonged. Where this has been issued, establishments should consider how this might impact on their establishment, for example:

- Staffing issues
- Fuel supplies
- In particular for Durants School, can the pupils be safely transported onto and off the premises via LBE arranged transport
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It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to make the decision on whether the school should close, if at all.

It is also the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils are advised of the decision to close the school. This should also include advice on how those affected will know when the premises have reopened.

The school must also contact the local authority to advise that the school has been closed and, if known, when it is likely to reopen or the situation will be reviewed.

Information should be provided by phone/text or e-mail to Snow phone 07908 819082.

DURANTS SCHOOL – Snow and Severe Weather Policy

The decision to close Durants will not be taken lightly but only as a last resort and due to an unacceptable risk as determined by a risk assessment.

Where at all possible, advanced warning will be given, particularly if the severe weather is likely to be prolonged.

Schools Severe Weather Guidance

- Catering supplies
- Transport e.g. personal cars, taxis, buses

Where it is likely that there will be prolonged severe weather, the Council will provide a departmental team to co-ordinate advice over the phone. In this situation, you should ring the main Borough Control Centre on 020 8379 1000 who will transfer you to the nominated advisory team. Regular updates will also be issued on the council website and via email communications.

Critical services within the Council that need to remain operational will be following their Business Continuity Plans during a period of disruption.

If an establishment is experiencing problems as a result of the severe weather issues e.g. lack of heating or damage to the building which constitute a hazard, the Schools' Health and Safety Team should be contacted on 020 8379 3223.

Severe Weather Helpline

Any practical advice on hazardous or potentially hazardous situations may also be discussed with the Schools' Health & Safety Team 020 8379 3223.

Staffing

In the case of schools, unless there has been a specific instruction from the Headteacher, staff are expected to use all practical means to attend work, without putting themselves or others at risk.

Headteachers should ensure there is an up to date list of home contact and mobile phone details for all staff. For Durants this can be found on Integris.

Schools need to plan to stay open; however, this can only happen if there are sufficient staff present. It would be sensible to look at how far staff live from the school and the probability they will be able to arrive at school during periods of severe weather disruption or at the least their journey may take longer and they may arrive late. However, if sufficient staff live within a reasonable distance from the school, or you are able to get additional staff, it may be possible to ensure sufficient staff are present to operate, albeit with a reduced curriculum for those days.

Remind staff (even parents) to keep stocked up with fuel during predicted prolonged periods of disruption

Additional Considerations

- In severe weather it may be appropriate to leave the heating on constantly for frost protection and to reduce the risk of frost affecting the heating and pipes.
- Brief staff in advance to know what is expected of them.

DURANTS SCHOOL – Snow and Severe Weather Policy

- Brief parents and children on how to access information.
- Where Schools are operating, risk assessments should be undertaken to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and site users.
- Liaise with suppliers/contractors on the schools current procedures and confirm new arrangements in place for accessing services and deliveries. Also, try to mediate on issues which the suppliers may have accessing the site and internal resourcing issues.
- Where high winds are expected and warnings issued, the site should be checked for loose fixings and all persons to be kept away from glass as much as possible. Regular tree surveys and maintenance should be undertaken to ensure trees are sufficiently stable to withstand high winds.
- In extreme conditions it may not be possible for children or staff to return home, establishments and schools should ensure there are plans in place to provide warmth, and hot refreshments.
- Once the Borough have received notification from the Met Office that the severe weather is due to pass, this information will be disseminated as before via email, the Councils Website and a Team will be available to provide up to date information via calling BCC.

Reopening Schools

When the severe weather has passed, establishments should do a visual check of their premises before announcing that it will reopen. The Headteacher and Site Manager may do the inspection and check amenities are functional i.e. heating, water/frost/wind/heat damage or damaged trees etc. It may be necessary to instruct a competent contractor to undertake exploratory work if a problem has been found. It may be necessary to contact the Schools Health and Safety Team for advice and notify them of the situation.

In the event that a school premises has experienced damage serious enough to affect the structure and/or the fabric, deeming the building unsafe and unable to occupy, you should contact Asset Management: 020 8379 3399. If you suspect Asbestos has been damaged, you may need to seek advice directly from the Asbestos Team 020 8379 8594.

Considerations

Before taking a decision to close or remain open, it is important to complete a suitable and sufficient assessment of hazards present and the risk after controls are implemented. When making your decision also consider the following:

- Impact of closure on parents
- Impact of closure on pupils
- Adapting lessons and classes according to staff numbers
- Health and safety
- Informing parents
- Risk assessment

Durants School Snow Policy

Any snow that covers Durants School premises will be cleared and the area gritted.

DURANTS SCHOOL – Snow and Severe Weather Policy

The exit for our **Southgate Site** school transport buses is through a public car park (Leigh Hunt Drive). As this is a public car park owned by the London Borough of Enfield it is their responsibility to ensure the car park is safe. Enfield have a 'No gritting of Car Parks Policy' (which can be found on Enfield Council's website). As this car park will not be cleared or gritted after the event of any snowfall it may become a potential health and safety risk. If Durants is open after snowfall it will be the responsibility of the transport department to risk assess if they feel it is safe to drive through. Durants School cannot accept the responsibility of clearing a public car park or gritting the area as it is not our property.

In the event pupils get dropped off in the morning by school transport but transport drivers feel it is too unsafe to return to collect, we will make contact with the transport department to see if a resolution can be reached. As a last resort parents will be contacted to collect their children.