



FOREST OF DEAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FEDERATION

PARKEND PRIMARY & YORKLEY PRIMARY

School Closure Policy 2025 - 2026

Ratified: November 2025

Signed by:

Executive
Headteacher

Chair of Governors

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Statement of Intent

It is the aim of the Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation to ensure both schools remain open 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.

• 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'

Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher 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.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety.

The School Caretaker is responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of rock salt.
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment.
- Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the Executive Headteacher of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Executive Headteacher.
- 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 relevant entrance to be collected by their parents.
- Modelling good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Encouraging pupils to stay appropriately hydrated.

Parents are responsible for:

- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- Collecting their children promptly when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date with at least two contacts listed in emergency.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.
- Applying suitable sun cream if applicable.
- Sending their children to school in appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.

Pupils are responsible for:

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

• **School Closure**

The decision to close either school will be made by the Executive Headteacher and the school Caretaker(s). The chair of governors may also be consulted. In the absence of the Executive Headteacher, the Deputy Executive Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher in relation to this policy.

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

- Conditions on site or in the immediate vicinity of the site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site or those travelling to it.
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely.

In the event of school closure:

- The Executive Headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message, e-mail, through the LA School Closure webpage or a staff WhatsApp group.
- The School Administrator(s) will post an update on the school(s) website.
- The school caretaker will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

In the event of either school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message, email 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 Executive Headteacher. 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.

• **Remaining Open in Adverse Weather Conditions**

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

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 school caretaker 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 if relevant to either school.

At the Executive Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.

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

• **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:

- Playground
- Access to playgroup

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

The school caretaker 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 school caretaker ensures that the relevant equipment is used during gritting, any damaged equipment is reported to the Executive Headteacher so that it can be replaced.

The supply of rock salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the School Business Manager is notified.

- **Health and Safety**

Both schools have a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

Either 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 Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with each 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 their 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 Executive Headteacher or school caretaker so the site can be reassessed.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the school caretaker in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the Executive Headteacher will be informed of the outcome no later than 7.00am.

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

- **Attendance**

Where a 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 Executive Headteacher 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 Executive Headteacher 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.
- A limit of 30 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

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

• **Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Executive Headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

• **Links with other Policies**

Health and Safety
Safeguarding and Child Protection
Staff Code of Conduct
Pay and Conditions
First Aid
Attendance
Appraisal
Lone Working