

The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools



Adverse Weather and School Closures Policy

Agreed Autumn 2022

To be Reviewed Autumn 2023

THE FEDERATION OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS & CLOSURES

During the winter months there are occasions when we may experience adverse weather conditions that can affect the opening and safe operation of the school. It can be difficult when we have snow and ice to determine how this will impact on travel arrangements for pupils and staff.

Every effort will be made to keep the school open and staffed. However, in adverse weather conditions some staff may arrive late and the start of the school day could be affected. Adverse weather may also affect the operation of the breakfast club, so parents/carers would need to be prepared for breakfast club being closed, if we do not have the staff on site to open the school. We will always try to keep parents informed in the event of our school or breakfast club being closed.

The decision to close the school either before or during the school day will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with The Chair of Governors. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. There are insufficient staff to come in to keep the school running safely.
2. Conditions on site are dangerous.
3. Conditions considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

If the school is to close:

1. The closure will be recorded on the St Helens Council Website:
www.sthelens.gov.uk/schoolclosures
2. Parents will be alerted to the closure using our text service and school social media channels, once the closure has been logged with St Helens Council.

If the school is closed, we will try and make a decision as early as possible, and we will aim to reopen as soon as we can. The school will make all practical efforts to keep parents informed about the situation, as we appreciate that such conditions and uncertainty can place considerable difficulties upon parents. We advise parents to check the following for updates:

- **Check our website**
- **Listen to local radio broadcasts**
- **Check the school's social media channels**

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive late. If delayed, parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way. You can do this by:

- Phone: **01744 678357** (infants), **01744 678603** (juniors)
- Email: **stmaryrcni@sthelens.org.uk** (infants) **stmaryrcnj@sthelens.org.uk** (juniors)

In instances where families are cut off and cannot get their children into school, parents should inform the school of this situation. We have a legal duty to clarify the absence to the Local Authority. 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 to school risks their child's absence being marked as un-authorised.

Where school is officially closed the register will be marked as an enforced closure and will not have any effect on pupil attendance figures.

In the event of school having to close during the day due unforeseen circumstances, parents will be informed by text and asked to collect their child. We will only close the school in extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children, and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be made aware of this in assembly. Before the start of the school day and at home time, parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the playground.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt wide pathways as follows:

Infant Site

- 1.** To the main office entrance.
- 2.** Across the playground to Y1 entrance
- 3.** Across the playground to Y2 entrance
- 4.** Across the playground to Nursery and Reception entrances.
- 5.** Across the carpark to Nursery and Reception entrances.

Junior Site

- 1.** To the main office entrance
- 2.** To the Y3 and Y4 entrances
- 3.** Across the playground to Y5 and Y6 entrances