




# London Borough of Enfield

## Severe Weather

## Guidance for Schools

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This page is for Schools Health & Safety Team document control only.

This plan is subject to ongoing change and will be updated as and when required.

**ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS OF CHASE SIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL ON  
WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

**TO BE REVIEWED OCTOBER 2026**

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Severe Weather .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Planning for adverse cold weather .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. During cold weather .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. Notification of Severe Weather .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Risk Assessment.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7. Reopening Schools .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Severe Weather Template Risk Assessment.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced the following document with regards to emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings.

[DfE's Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings.](#)

This guidance explains how schools should respond to severe weather, including cold temperatures, snow, and ice.

Any incidents or disruptions due to severe weather would form part of the school's emergency plan which all schools are required to have, to minimise disruption if an incident or emergency occurs.

## 2. Severe Weather

During severe weather conditions, you should keep your setting open and let as many children, pupils or students attend as possible, where safe to do so. Severe weather conditions include:

- extreme heat (*the SHST Team have separate guidance for Hot Weather*)
- flooding
- storms
- snow

However, it might be necessary to close temporarily due to inaccessibility or risk of injury. You should do all you can to reopen as soon as possible.

If you're temporarily closed during severe weather, consider [providing remote education](#). Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open, or to reopen as soon as possible.

Schools that are a member of the [risk protection arrangement](#) can contact the team to get help with damage and other issues.

If you're an early years, wraparound childcare or out-of-school activities provider and have had to move to temporary premises, check to see if you need to [register your new premises with Ofsted](#).

## 3. Planning for adverse cold weather

To prepare for and respond to severe weather, including cold temperatures, snow and icy conditions, settings can follow the general guidance set out in the above guidance.

This advice includes developing emergency plans to prepare for risks from adverse cold weather, and approaches which can be used for communicating with parents, carers and others in the event of severely cold temperatures. Parents/Carers can also be provided with the following link which will advise them if their school has been closed in an emergency like severe weather [School closures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

It also includes advice on making decisions about closing education and childcare settings if weather conditions are severe enough to warrant this. It also sets out advice on the provision of remote education, where appropriate.

Schools can also sign up to receive [Weather-Health Alerts](#) from UKHSA and the Met Office. These alerts underpin the [Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) and through Enfield's Community Safety Team.

#### 4. During cold weather

**The following guidance has been produced for education settings.**

This guidance has been produced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) with engagement from the Department for Education (DfE). It is intended for those who work in or manage schools or early years settings and offers advice on looking after children attending these settings during cold weather. It applies to:

- early years and childcare
- wraparound childcare and out of school settings
- children's social care
- schools
- alternative provision settings
- special educational needs and disability (SEND) and specialist settings

Adverse cold weather, snow and ice may create hazardous conditions for children, parents, carers, and staff.

[Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Settings can reduce this risk by:

- gritting and removing ice and/or snow from priority areas and routes
- prioritising maintenance of heating systems to keep rooms being used warm
- closing rooms or buildings that are too cold for children, young people, and staff members to use

Advice on keeping buildings warm during adverse cold weather can be adapted from guidance to prepare for cold weather.

Finally, consider [ventilating indoor spaces](#), especially those where people gather, even for short periods each day to help reduce the risk of spread of infection

## **5. Notification of Severe Weather**

In the event that a decision has been made by the Headteacher to close the school due to severe weather, the school must contact the Director's office at Enfield Council to advise that the school has been closed and, if known, when it is likely to reopen and when the situation will be reviewed.

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.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

The decision to close any establishment should be determined by a risk assessment (Appendix 1 – this template can be used to adapt to fit the needs of the school). This will, inevitably, vary between establishments.

## **7. Reopening Schools**

When the severe weather has passed, establishments should carry out checks on their premises before announcing reopening. The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team/Site Team will carry out the inspection and check amenities are functional i.e. heating, water/frost/wind/heat damage, or damaged trees etc.

## Appendix 1 – Severe Weather Template Risk Assessment

Description/Activity/Condition /Area <b><u>SEVERE WEATHER</u></b>		School:	Date of Assessment	
What are the Hazards?	Who is at risk and how would they be harmed? (e.g., Staff, pupils, visitors, contractors etc.)	What is currently done to reduce/control the risk?	What more can be done to reduce risk?	Action by whom?
Unsafe access and egress into school site	Staff, pupils, visitors, contractors etc., slip, trip or fall on frozen surrounding areas of school site.	Local authority grit areas outside of school perimeter. Headteacher to decide whether the school should remain open.	Clear communications to parents, carers etc on updates of severe weather closures.  Review weather updates and forecasts.  Monitor transport and road updates for accessibility.	Headteacher
Slips, trips, and falls	Staff, pupils, visitors, contractors etc., slip, trip or fall on frozen walkways,	Grit walkways, playgrounds and drop-off areas prior to freezing temperatures and snowfall wherever possible. Gritting will continue if freezing temperatures remain through the day.	Clear communications to Staff are aware they are responsible for sticking to paths which are clear and safe to use and will not	Headteacher

	<p>playgrounds and drop off areas etc.</p>	<p>Clear walkways &amp; drop off areas to be used after snowfall.</p> <p>Areas that cannot be cleared, or that are not essential for the running of the school, will be avoided by staff and pupils, visitors, contractors etc.</p> <p>The Head will decide on the day whether outdoor play is suitable. If outdoor play goes ahead, additional supervision may be required. This will be assessed by the Head based on severity of weather.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk">Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Priority will be given to commonly used routes and slopes/staircases that cannot be avoided.</p> <p>Emergency exits and escape routes will be cleared.</p>	<p>attempt to use unsafe or obstructed paths.</p> <p>Staff/Site Team able to assist with gritting/clearing paths etc. should be established prior to being required. This is so that they can be given appropriate training and where necessary, appropriate footwear.</p>	
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<p>Insufficient staff able to attend work</p>	<p>Pupils, staff, visitors, contractors etc, having slips, trips and falls accidents due to lack of supervision available</p>	<p>Ensure minimum number of staff by identifying which local staff will be attending work.</p> <p>Consider arrangements for staff to stay overnight locally.</p> <p>Arrange alternative lesson plans, which can be managed by skeleton staff and merging classes.</p>	<p>Clear communications to parents, carers, staff, etc on possible school closure if Headteacher sees fit.</p> <p>Regular review of staffing levels and senior leadership team.</p>	<p>Headteacher</p>
<p>Cold temperatures indoors - less than 16°</p>	<p>Staff, pupils, visitors etc. exposure to prolonged exposure to cold</p>	<p>Use only heating part of building.</p> <p>Arrange portable equipment hire.</p> <p>Headteacher to make the decision to close school if there is no means of heating the school.</p> <p>Vulnerable workers/pupils needs/requirements to be considered in severe weather and extra precautions carried out as appropriate.</p>	<p>Ensure up-to-date maintenance and regular servicing of heating system. Consider additional hot and cold drinks are made available at breakfast clubs etc.</p>	<p>Headteacher</p>

Cold temperatures outdoors	Staff, pupils, visitors etc. exposure to prolonged exposure to cold	<p>Keep children inside if more appropriate</p> <p>Ensure children have appropriate waterproof clothing and footwear and clear communications are sent to parents, carers etc.</p> <p>The Head will decide on the day whether outdoor play is suitable. If outdoor play goes ahead, additional supervision may be required. This will be assessed by the Head based on severity of weather.</p>	<p>Clear communications to parents, carers etc on updates of severe weather closures.</p> <p>Review weather updates and forecasts.</p> <p>Site Team/Staff to review gritting plans and potential working more flexibly to clear areas.</p>	Headteacher
Date of Review	Who was present at assessment?	<p>Actions - Agreed</p> <p>Not agreed</p>	<p>Assessors Name</p> <p>Signature</p>	
Comments				