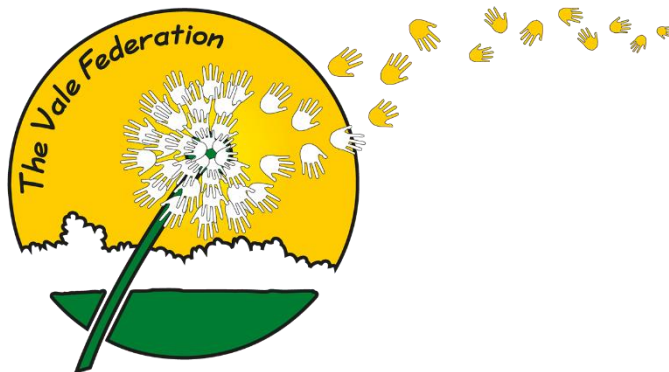


Inspire - Enable - Achieve




The Vale Federation Adverse Weather Policy

Date policy last reviewed: October 2024

Date policy to be reviewed: October 2025

Signed:



Principal

Date 22nd October 2024

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of The Vale Federation (Booker Park School and Stocklake Park School) to ensure the schools remain open during adverse weather conditions, 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.

1. 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
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Adverse Weather and Health Plan'
- DfE (2023) 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Business Continuity Emergency Plan

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for:

- Deciding in conjunction with the Business Director, 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.
- Ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for pupils in terms of sun safety

The Business Director is responsible for:

- Deciding in conjunction with the Principal, whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Ensuring this policy is up to date and all line managers are aware of its contents
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.

- Ensuring staff have received appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy, and ensuring staff act in accordance with this policy.

The Premises Manager is responsible for:

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

Staff members are responsible for:

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

Parents are responsible for:

- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

Pupils and Parents are responsible for:

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

3. School closure

The Principal and Business Director will sign up to receive [Weather-Health Alerts](#) from the UKHSA and Met Office. The Facilities & Estates Team will make a local assessment and initiate all appropriate procedures in response to an alert. Alerts will be reviewed to ensure the school fully understands the potential impacts and how likely they are to occur.

The decision to close the school will be made by the Principal and the Business Director. The chair of governors will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the Principal, the Head of School will assume the responsibility of the Principal in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

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

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- The Principal will inform staff and parents via SMS text message or telephone, and update the Buckinghamshire School closures website via Schoolsweb
- The Business Director via the Marketing Executive will post an update on the school website
- The Premises Manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via SMS text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Where the school is temporarily closed due to adverse weather, the Principal will aim to ensure the school can provide remote learning in line with the Remote Learning Policy.

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 Principal and Business Director. 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.

4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

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

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 Premises Manager 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.

At the Principal's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground(s) may be out-of-bounds to pupils and staff.

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

5. 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:

- **Booker Park School** – pavement walkways around the front of the building perimeter, including the Top Car Park access walkway to the Main Building Reception, East Wing Reception, Early Years Reception, Main Corridor Car Park 2 Security gate Entrance and CLD Top Entrance door pathway
- **Stocklake Park School** – walkway from the Lower Car Park up to the main reception entrance, walkway from the Main Reception to the 6th Form Building, walkway to the 6th Form Building

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

- **Booker Park School** – entrance pathway along Stoke Leys Close up to the school driveway crossing point, including the Stoke Leys Close Road
- **Stocklake Park School** – walkway into the Muga and single walkway through the Muga, rear Muga exit pathway to the Main Building, Connect Building Entrance and main gates entrance and driveway

The Business Director decides which areas of the school are designated ‘first phase’ and ‘second phase’ for gritting.

The Premises Manager 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 not to be used by pupils or staff unless directed otherwise by the Business Director or Principal.

The Premises Manager ensures that the relevant equipment is used during gritting, by those who are fully trained to do so, any damaged equipment is reported to the Business Director so that it can be replaced.

The supply of grit salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the Business Director is notified.

A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting. This record is passed on to the Business Director.

6. Health and safety

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The 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 Principal and Business Director are responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the 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 the 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 Principal or Business Director so the site can be reassessed.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the Premises Manager in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions and the Business Director will be informed of the outcome at 7.00am. The Business Director will inform the Principal.

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

The school is committed to ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of pupils. To minimise the risk of ill health during adverse temperatures, the school will:

- Encourage staff and pupils to keep as much of their skin as possible covered up during the Summer months and wearing appropriate clothing during the Winter months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) 15 with UVA protection on any part of the body that they cannot cover up during the Summer months.
- Encourage staff and pupils to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Reschedule work/outdoor lessons according to the outdoor temperature.
- Situate water points and rest areas in the shade during hot temperatures.
- Encourage staff and pupils to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.
- Encourage staff and pupils to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Encourage staff and pupils to stay hydrated.

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during adverse cold weather, the school will:

- Ensure heating systems are maintained and in good working order, prioritising rooms being used where appropriate.
- Draught-proof windows, doors and other points of energy loss.
- Close rooms or buildings that are too cold to be used.
- Ventilate indoor spaces, where possible, especially where people gather, to help reduce the risk of infections spreading.
- Promote the flu vaccine for eligible staff and pupils, and encourage parents to keep their children up to date with routine immunisations.
- Reinforce messaging around the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Encourage physical activity where appropriate to help keep pupils warm.
- Provide information to parents and pupils on important logistical changes, e.g. disrupted bus routes, during severe weather.
- Ensure pupils have a sufficient supply of hot meals and snacks.
- Signpost parents to key sources of support, e.g. heating and other energy efficiency measures, during cold weather periods.

Relevant staff members will be made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions.

Where a pupil is suffering from heat illness, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- Moving the pupil to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
- Cooling the pupil as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, and assisting cooling using a fan.
- Where the pupil does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called.
- If the pupil loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the pupil will continue until the ambulance arrives.

Where a pupil is suspected to be suffering from heatstroke, 999 will be called immediately and the pupil will be cooled down in line with the procedures for managing heat exhaustion outlined above whilst awaiting medical assistance.

Where a pupil loses consciousness or experiences a fit or seizure, they will be placed in the recovery position, 999 will be called immediately and staff will follow the operator's instructions.

7. Attendance

Where the 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 Principal 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 Principal or Business Director 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.

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

8. Exam disruption

If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

The school takes full responsibility for informing parents and pupils of any agreed changes concerning exams in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the pupil to sit any missed exam later in the year.

9. Clothing

During the Summer months, when temperatures reach above 25 degrees Celsius (°C), everyone working at or attending the school will be encouraged to protect their face, neck and ears using a sun-safe hat with a wide brim. Baseball caps or visors are not considered sun-safe hats.

Pupils without sun-safe hats will only be permitted to play in an area protected from the sun, unless a sun-safe hat has been provided. Pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be required to play in an area protected from the sun, if spare clothing cannot be provided.

During the Winter months, pupils are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

10. Business Continuity Emergency plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the Business Continuity Emergency Plan.

The emergency plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parent contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move pupils to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort children.
- Contact parents.
- Deal with any media interest.

Each member of staff will have electronic access to the emergency plan in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

All parents will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, for instance, their duty to collect children.

11. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Business Director, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

This policy will be reviewed annually.