

*St Martin-in-the-Fields
High School for Girls*



With Love and Learning

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

APPROVED: November 2016

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: November 2018

St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls
is a company limited by guarantee registered
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**St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls
Severe Weather Policy**

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and managers with guidance regarding the approach the school will take in times of bad weather (e.g. heavy snow or flooding). St Martin's School recognises that during periods of severe weather, staff may face difficulties in travelling to and from work.

Wherever possible, the school will remain open, and this will form the basis for decisions taken by the school regarding the attendance (or continued attendance) of staff at work. The school will take into account advice issued by the police, weather centre or local media in relation to prevailing weather conditions and the advisability of travel as well as the impact on the ability of the school to remain open and the health and safety of staff.

It is expected that staff attend work wherever possible, acting responsibly and proactively. Where staff have individual concerns (e.g. emergency caring responsibilities due to the closure of their child's school) they are encouraged to raise those concerns with either a senior manager or the Business Manager. The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and managers with guidance regarding the approach the school will take in times of bad weather (e.g. heavy snow or flooding).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of St Martin's, any contracted and agency workers and any other individual working on the school site.

3. Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are treated fairly and consistently in the application of this policy. The Headteacher will advise in response to bad weather. The Headteacher will decide on whether or not the school can remain open and will ensure the Snow Routine is adhered to.

Business Manager

The Business is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and procedure. With the Headteacher, the Business Manager will also ensure that the policy is implemented fairly and consistently, whilst acknowledging that there will be individual circumstances that will need to be taken into account.

Managers

Managers and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they carry out their responsibilities fairly and consistently, ensuring staff are aware that it is expected that they attend work wherever possible.

Staff

Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and for following any further instructions issued by or on behalf of the Headteacher. All staff are expected to make every effort to attend work. Staff are encouraged to think ahead and have a contingency plan in mind, should bad weather occur. Staff may need to consider alternative methods of travel and alternative routes. Staff are also encouraged to consider the options they face should their normal childcare arrangements be disrupted. If you know you are going to be delayed, or you are unable to get into work, please contact the absence cover line on 07885 879 632 at the earliest opportunity. The school line can be used in emergencies and if the cover line is busy which is 0208 674 5594.

4. Equality and Diversity

St Martin's is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.

Where an employee has a disability that restricts their ability to travel, the employee and their manager (with support from the Human Resources Department) may wish to consider making contingency arrangements, bearing in mind 'reasonable adjustments' reflected in the Equality Act 2010.

5. Vision and Values

St Martin's vision is to develop a culture of respect, honesty and high aspiration, encouraging staff and students to inspire each other and learn to value greatness, ambition and achievement of all kinds. St Martin's aims to remain open when there is bad weather and will only close when absolutely necessary, ensuring that student learning is not affected wherever possible.

6. Severe Weather

Staff can expect to be treated fairly and consistently in circumstances of severe weather. All staff are expected to attend work in bad weather. Where staff make every effort to attend work and arrive late, or have to turn back after making significant efforts to attend, their pay will not be affected, therefore they will receive normal pay. Where staff have no option, but to leave early, they should access the Special Leave Policy in terms of access to emergency leave.

All staff are expected to attend work in bad weather wherever possible. Where severe weather and individual circumstances mean that the employee cannot travel to work (e.g. caring responsibilities, snowed in at home) they will be required to either take the time as annual leave or make the time up at the discretion of their manager, who must be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate action is taken. Where the Headteacher decides that the school must close due to severe weather, staff sent home will be paid their normal pay.

Where the school is closed and some staff are required to remain at school, consideration should be given to the rationale for this decision (e.g. do they live locally? Have they volunteered to remain at work and have assessed any associated health and safety risks?)

7. Monitoring Compliance with and Effectiveness of this Policy

Compliance and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, Business Manager and Governors.

8. Associated Documentation

- Special Leave Procedure

9. Appendices

- Snow Routine Protocol and Procedures
- Guidance for staff

Appendix 1

The Snow Routine and Protocol and Procedures

In the event of bad weather, usually snow, it is the school's policy to remain open unless we are forced to close because there is a risk to the health and safety of staff and students.

1. If there is severe weather overnight

The Headteacher is responsible for making the decision. This will usually be early morning before travel to school is necessary. The Headteacher consults with a) Premises staff, 2) Staff living close to the school, and 3) Staff travelling distances to school. If the decision is made to close the school the Chair of the Governing Body will be notified as will the LA using the attached form.

The Headteacher will ensure that information regarding closure is posted online on the schools website, parents are notified by text via Truancy Call and the Schools Twitter feed.

Staff will be notified of a closure, if possible, by text as soon as the decision is made. Staff should assume that the school is open unless notified by text, or a notice of closure is placed on the schools website.

Parents and staff can check the school website for confirmation of a school closure. Unless such a notice is placed on the school website, the school is open.

2. If the weather deteriorates during the day

Information will be posted online on the schools website, parents are notified by text via Truancy Call and the Schools Twitter feed.

Many parents ring the school if there is an increasing risk of snow falling heavily during the day. It can be frustrating trying to get through when all our outside lines are engaged by other parents calling for the same reason. We will ensure that our website is updated throughout the day regarding any developments.

3. Preparing for snow and ice

The school will consider a number of actions, prior to the winter months, to ensure it is prepared to manage the implications of bad weather.

- Communicate via the website and through newsletters, the school's policy for extreme snow and icy conditions
- Ensure stocks of salt/grit/sand are adequate for the time of year and foreseeable weather.
- Pre-identify the outdoor areas used by students/staff most likely to be affected by ice, for example:
 - building entrances, pathways, walkways, shortcuts, sloped areas and areas constantly in the shade or wet.
- Ensure water, boiler and heating systems are regularly maintained.
- Check that pipes are appropriately lagged.
- Consider putting plans in place to restrict the movement of pupils and staff around the school grounds.

Actions that will be taken in the days before forecasted snow and ice:

- Regular checking of weather forecasts via news / websites / weather apps
- Take action whenever freezing temperatures are forecast e.g.
- Leave heating on a low setting overnight

- Close all internal doors
- Use grit or similar on areas prone to being slippery in frosty/icy conditions.

4. Risk Assessment/Management

Risk management and assessment helps identify potential risks in advance of severe snow and ice and ensure appropriate control measures are implemented. It also assists the Headteacher in making the right decision on the day by adopting an approach that is grounded in common sense and being proportionate.

Implicit in the risk assessment/management are the following:

- Is the school building accessible?
- Are pedestrian routes on the school grounds passable?
- Is there staff available to clear these routes using shovels, salt & grit etc?
- Can priority be made in respect to slopes, steps or ramps or can these areas be restricted from use?
- Can the Headteacher gain enough teaching and/or supervisory staff to operate safely?
- Can the school be partially open e.g. for lessons of specific year groups?
- Is the school appropriately heated and is there enough fuel for the day?
- Are water systems working appropriately?
- Is it possible to restrict outside play to limit the snow/ice becoming compacted and therefore more dangerous.

During each day of bad weather affecting the decision to stay open or to close, the Head Teacher will review the risk assessment.

5. Car Parks

Every effort to clear the car parking areas will be made so that it is safe for the arrival of staff cars. Priority however will be given to pedestrian areas. Staff must be made aware that they enter the schools premises at their own risk.

During periods of snow the car park will be made as reasonably clear as possible by the end of teaching hours to enable the safe exit of staff. This is to include gritting between the cars if snow has fallen during the day.

Appendix 2

Guidance for Staff

1. Plan Ahead

- Check with colleagues if there is anyone that passes near your house that would choose to drive in bad weather (e.g. a confident driver with a suitable vehicle) and would be able to collect you on their way into work.
- Consider alternative childcare arrangements should your normal arrangements be disrupted (e.g. if the nursery/school closes).
- Consider alternative routes (if you normally use back roads could you travel more safely on a busier route?).
- Consider alternative methods of travel (e.g. walking rather than driving if you live locally).
- Ensure you are familiar with the Snow Routine Protocol.

2. On the Day

- If you are unable to get into work, contact the absence line at the earliest opportunity.
- If you are notified that your normal childcare arrangements are disrupted (e.g. school/nursery closure) and you have no alternative arrangements available to you, refer to the Special Leave Policy and discuss your circumstances with the Headteacher.
- You will be unable to bring your children into school unless they are students that already attend St Martin's as the school is not insured. Please check with the Headteacher.