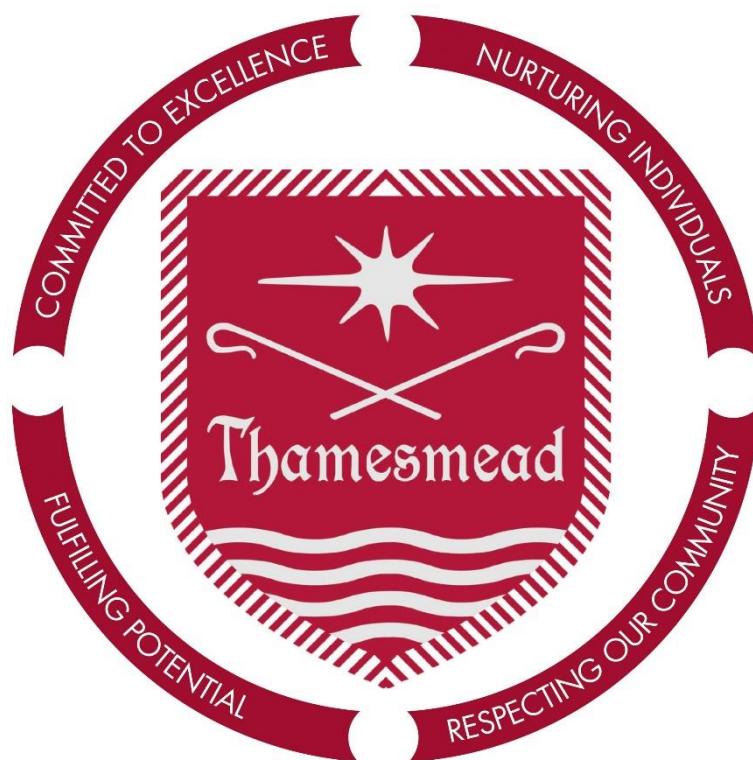


THAMESMEAD SCHOOL



Policy Document

Bad Weather Policy Guidance for Parents/Carers

Person Responsible	Phil Reeves
Governors Committee	Resources & Audit Committee
Review period	Every Three Years
Date of review	Summer 2021
Date of next review	Summer 2024

Guidance for Parents/Carers in the Case of Bad Weather

Context

Fortunately, extremely bad weather (particularly snow) is a rare event in Shepperton. It is Thamesmead's policy to remain open unless we are forced to close because there is a risk to the health and safety of students and staff.

School closure is highly unlikely and will be avoided where possible. The decision to close the school will be taken by the headteacher (or deputy head in his absence) in consultation with the Health & Safety Lead. The Chair of Governors will be notified.

Decisions on whether to remain open will be made on the basis of local circumstances and local advice. We will take into account the weather conditions around the school, transport and travel restrictions and the availability of staff. Information will be sought from the local authority, from the Environment Agency and bus and train operators.

Understandably, the school office receives many phone calls from anxious parents/carers at these times but we ask you to remain patient in the event and wait to receive information from the school. Please only phone the school in an emergency.

Communication of School Closure

The decision to close will be reviewed where possible the day before impending bad weather and communicated to parents and staff via the channels listed below, however if conditions change overnight updates will be made by 7am on the day.

- If we are closed an announcement will be posted on the home page of the **school website** www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk by 7am.
- You will also receive a **text message** from our School comms service which displays the number 01932-30002.
- **Local radio stations**, BBC Surrey, Eagle Radio and Radio Jackie will also broadcast information on the school's status.
- **County Council website** - <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-closures>

In addition staff will be notified via

- **Text message** from our School comms service
- The **school website** www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk by 7am.

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

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

Distance Learning

In the event of school (early) closures, students are able to support their learning at home by completing home learning/controlled assessments. Students should check work set on Teams and their school email as class teachers may email them work to complete.

If the school is able to open but there is local disruption:

Attendance

- Parents should report anticipated late arrivals – the school fully appreciates that in bad weather children may arrive later than usual, parents should ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late.
- Unauthorised absences will be recorded as usual - if parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

Site Safety

In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, students and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Students will also be reminded of this in assembly and asked to walk only on cleared pathways.

Where the school is open and there is snow / ice on the playgrounds the following guidelines apply:

- Students are advised to wear appropriate footwear for these conditions, and information will be provided on the website by 7am if this is the case.
- Students must remain on the main footpaths between buildings when moving to lessons. These will be cleared and gritted to ensure access is as safe as possible.
- At break / lunchtime:
 - The field is out of bounds
 - If there is ice on the playgrounds, these will also be out of bounds and students must stay indoors
 - If there is a light covering of snow, students may go outside to the playground but may not throw snowballs. Experience has shown that it is not possible to supervise safely circa 1000 students, on a large site, and allow them to throw snowballs. However in reality it is not possible to guarantee this will never happen and parents should instruct their son / daughter to remain inside if there is any concern.
 - Students may remain in the building in designated venues (canteen, hall or supervised clubs) unless it is wet break, when wet weather venues apply.

Students will also be made aware that bringing snow into the building on shoes / clothing creates an additional health and safety risk and that everyone should take additional care in the corridors and on the stairs.

Where the school is open and there is lightning / heavy rain / excessive heat, the following guidelines apply to prevent the risk presented by:

Lightning

- Three lightning conductors have been installed in the following locations: English block, the Chimney and Water Tower on the main building. These are serviced and inspected annually.
- Staff responsible for organising outdoor duties, activities and educational visits will check the weather forecast (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>) as part of the risk assessment process.
- 30-30 rule for lightning safety - After you see **lightning**, start counting to **30**. If the **flash to bang** is 30 seconds in length or less seek shelter. If you hear **thunder** before you reach **30**, go indoors and suspend activities for at least **30** minutes after the last clap of **thunder**.
- In the event of lightning all students will be moved to their designated wet break area of safety. In the following locations: Jubilee Centre and Mezzanine - Y7, Dining Hall (ground floor) - Y8, Old Gym (backup Sports Hall) - Y9, Quad - Y10.

Heavy Rain/Storm

- Staff responsible for organising outdoor duties, activities and educational visits will check the weather forecast (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>) as part of the risk assessment process.
- In the event of bad weather, all students will be moved to their designated wet break area. In the following locations: Jubilee Centre and Mezzanine - Y7, Dining Hall (ground floor) - Y8, Old Gym (backup Sports Hall) - Y9, Quad - Y10.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children have suitable waterproof clothing and/or umbrella during poor weather.
- The Duty Leader will decide if the weather is bad enough for a 'wet' break or a 'wet' lunchtime. Students will be informed by duty staff.
- Duty Staff will supervise the students in the designated wet break areas.

Excessive Heat

- The school is mindful that the World Health Organisation recommends 24°C (75°F) as a maximum for comfortable indoor working, when temperatures are forecast to go above this, measures from the below list will be utilised to keep students and staff comfortable. In cases of extreme heat should a decision be made on starting and finishing school early, adequate notice will be given to staff and parents.
- Staff will take steps to achieve a reasonably comfortable working environment, utilising the following measures:
 - Opening windows for natural ventilation.
 - Closing of blinds.
 - Moving students away from the windows when necessary.
 - Installation of Fans.
 - Permission is given for students to drink their water in classrooms.
 - Relaxation of dress code in line with School policy for example removing blazer, or wearing a polo shirt. This will be communicated to students via tutor time and/or parents via School Comms.
 - In advance of hot weather, the school will advise students/parents via School Comms, for students to bring hats, sun cream and a water bottle to school with them.

Closure during the school day

Should the weather turn worse during a school day, the school will make an informed decision on the best action to take having checked weather reports and sought advice from our bus companies and other local transport.

Students will only be sent home if the bus companies inform us that they need to leave early, or are unable to run their usual service. If the school buses are leaving early or are cancelled the **website will be updated as quickly as possible and you will receive a School comms message advising you of this fact.** We will inform the relevant students and arrange for them to leave school at an appropriate time.

In extreme circumstances the school may permit students to contact parent/carers using their mobile phones, if they have one. Such calls must always have prior approval from a teacher and would take place in a supervised environment. Please note that mobile phone use is not permitted on school premises under normal conditions unless with specific permission from a teacher.

No students will be allowed to leave school early without permission from their parent/carer. If we believe that any student is at risk of being unable to travel home safely, we will contact their parent/carer. All students will be kept safe in school until we have been able to make contact with a parent/carer and received permission to allow them to go home. Please be aware that parents/carers who arrive to collect students may have to wait whilst the child is located within the school.