



Severe Winter Weather Plan

School Name: St. Peter's Pre-School

Date of Plan:

10/02/2014

Revised: 2014, 2015, 2016,
2021

Review of Plan/updated:

08/10/2017, 07/10/2018,

04/11/2021, 07/09/2023

Plan created by:

TC

Introduction:

In 2009 and 2010 schools in West Berkshire suffered the impact of severe winter weather. This severe winter weather plan for St. Peter's pre-school gives guidance to reduce the impact and to explain procedures in the event of temporary closure in the future. Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances. Factors such as the access and maintenance of the site, the distance of staff from the site and the variation of severe weather making travelling unpredictable for pupils and staff will be considered.

Where possible an early decision to close the pre-school will be made to provide parents with enough time to arrange childcare and avoid unnecessary journeys. If weather forecasts make it likely that the pre-school will not be able to open the next day a decision will be made the previous afternoon. We understand that closing at short notice may cause difficulties for families if they need to make arrangements for children to be cared for during the school day.

Prevention is key so when the winter season arrives we will regularly monitor weather forecasts.

Whenever freezing temperatures or snow is forecast we will prepare for action. A risk assessment will be completed of hazards associated with snow and ice on the pre-school site to identify procedures to be implemented. This will be updated and reviewed regularly. Due to the pre-school's semi-rural location it may mean that country roads that pupils and staff travel on may be dangerous. These routes and areas may not be treated with salt/grit and this will be considered because if parents or staff feel that they cannot travel safely - they should not attempt the journey. After the completion of a risk assessment, along with discussions with relevant people a decision will be made whether it is necessary to temporarily close the pre-school. The risk assessment will be filed and a copy issued to West Berks as evidence should justification be needed to defend the school closure.

As the pre-school operates from the St.Peter's Church site we rely on the Church wardens making sure that the following preparations are met before winter weather arrives.

- Thermostat is set to at least ten degrees to avoid pipes freezing
- The heating system is monitored and working effectively especially when the site is not being occupied.
- Test plumbing and shut off valves to prevent seizing
- Sufficient insulation around external pipes.
- Access and pathways are maintained to meet health and safety regulations

We have a close relationship with St. Peter's Church which leads to effective communication; this in turn helps to maintain an effective severe winter weather plan.

Sometimes we may have to close due to unavoidable circumstances such as when staff and their families are affected by the weather. Legislation states that for a pre-school to operate effectively there needs to be sufficient staffing levels of supervision to safely meet the needs of the children.

If there is a short fall of adult supervision DBS –checked committee members may be asked to cover staff absences. On rare occasion staff may have to bring their own children into pre-school to be able to come to work. Cases such as these will be supported with a risk assessment that will be attached to the severe winter weather risk assessment.



Aims:

Our Aim is to keep the pre-school open and running for as long as we are able and for as long as is safe to do so. We aim to adhere to Ofsted regulations and statutory practice as set out within the EYFS with regard to staffing levels and adult: child ratio requirements. Therefore our overriding principle is to remain open to the maximum degree possible, as is consistent with health and safety requirements.

Consequences:

We understand that closing the pre-school at short notice may cause difficulties for families, pupils and staff. We understand that it may cause childcare issues, loss of earnings and can have a detrimental impact on vulnerable pupils. A decision will be made as early as possible for families to arrange childcare and to avoid unnecessary journeys. The decision to close the pre-school will not be taken lightly and will ultimately depend on the safety of the site, traveling conditions and appropriate staffing levels for safe supervision of the children.

Please be advised that we cannot direct a member of staff to drive in conditions they consider to be dangerous.

Triggers:

The supervisor will action this plan when a severe weather warning has been issued or whenever freezing temperatures, ice or snow are forecast by the met office. It may also be actioned if the supervisor feels weather conditions are severe enough to raise health and safety concerns.

(If the supervisor is unavailable the responsibility to action the plan will be with the deputy who may contact the chairperson for guidance if needed).

The supervisor will take into account the situation at the pre-school site and the conditions that may affect staff and pupils especially those who live outside the immediate area and rely on travelling by car or public transport. The supervisor will also consider the chances of possible severe weather occurring whilst the pre-school is operating. **A decision will be made by 8:00am of the effected day or if possible, the evening before whether to action the 'Severe winter weather plan' which may or may not lead to the pre-school being closed.**

All parents are advised to check out social media pages for the most up-to-date information. All parents will also be emailed by the parent rep as soon as any decision has been made.



Roles and Responsibilities:

Supervisor – **Tina Collins**, Responsible for making the decision to action the severe winter weather plan and to notify the chairperson of justification of the final decision.

Deputy – **Laura Lane or Charlotte Smith**, to act up in supervisor's absence in making the decision to action the severe winter weather plan with possible guidance from the chairperson if required.

Chairperson – **Christine Evans**, Responsible for notifying West Berkshire and Ofsted of closure or restricted opening hours and re-opening hours for St. Peter's pre-school.

Church Wardens – **Robin Evans** Responsible for maintaining the site including heating, entrances and pathways so they meet relevant health and safety regulations. The Church Wardens are also responsible for reporting any issues that may result in health and safety not being met to regulations or church policy to the supervisor or Deputy in the supervisor's absence

Communication:

1. Supervisor contacts staff to ascertain their situation regarding travelling to the setting and school arrangements for their children.
2. Supervisor contacts chairperson to report any travel or staff childcare issues and agree on a decision to open, close or partially close the setting.
3. Supervisor contacts the parent rep with the decision and posts a notice on social media.
4. Parent Rep emails all parents about the decision to close or open, requesting a response to having receipt of the information.
5. Chairperson contacts West Berks and Ofsted to report a closure.

If Heating System fails

Church Warden will contact the supervisor and the above actions of communication will start at point 2.

Parents are asked to note that it may not be possible for staff to answer the phone and we would ask that you do not phone the pre-school.



St.Peter's Pre-school

Additional Information:

Contact WBC on **01635 551111** should you have any queries or require assistance

Telephone Number of LA (Out of hours, incidents only) **01635 42161**

School Closure Email Address schoolclosures@westberkshire.gov.uk

Pre-school Email Address teachers@stpeterspreschool.org.uk

This document was adopted at a meeting of the Pre-school held on.....
(Date)

Signed on behalf of the Pre-school: (Chairperson)