

Stepgates Community School



Snow Policy

Mission Statement

At Stepgates Community School everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow together, as independent, enthusiastic and confident learners, in a creative, healthy and safe environment.

This policy is based on our Mission Statement and Aims for our school.

At Stepgates Community School we recognise that heavy snowfall can cause significant problems for staff and families attempting to come into school. Disruption to transport services may prevent many members of staff and children from coming in to school at all. Ice and snow may cause hazardous conditions to road users and to those on foot. This impacts the number of people who are able to safely come into school on 'snow days', and therefore, we may need to take a decision before the school day begins about whether the school should be closed until further notice.

Our Decision:

- The duty of care to our children and staff will always be at the forefront of any decision to either keep the school open in adverse weather or to affect a closure.
- We will always aim to keep the school open if possible, as we recognise the inconvenience of disruption to the normal school week.
- We will make a decision as soon as is practicable, but it is possible that a final decision will not be taken until the morning of closure as and when enough information becomes available.
- Our decision will be based on the information that we are in possession of at the time the decision is made.

Factors that will affect our decision:

- Whether there are enough members of staff able to travel safely to and from school in order to be able to provide satisfactory care for our children.
- Whether the severity of the weather conditions is on such a major scale that it is unlikely that many people will be able, physically, to make it into school.
- Whether conditions are expected to worsen or improve during the course of the day.
- Whether the school can provide lunch for the children.
- Whether the school grounds are sufficiently safe for children, parents and staff.
- Whether the school has sufficient heating.
- Whether the school has lighting and hot water across the site.
- Whether external agencies, e.g. police, local government, motoring organisations, etc, are advising against travel in our region.

Advice

We advise parents not to set off for school without first confirming that the school will be open.

If the weather forecast for the following day predicts adverse weather such as snow and it is possible our school will not be able to open, then a message will be placed on the school website and also a message will be sent home, alerting families to:

- a. The weather forecast and the possibility that school may not be able to operate normally on the following day;
- b. The need to monitor the school website and the school answer phone for further information. We will also text any decisions as they are made;
- c. A late start the following day - students will be requested to stay at home until 8.45am when the messages will indicate either that school will be closed or will start at 10am.
- d. Additionally parents can be informed of closures on Surrey County Council's website www.surreycc.gov.uk, SurreyAlert on www.surreyalert.info and via the local radio stations.

If the weather conditions in the morning are unexpectedly poor or deteriorate suddenly then the website and answer phone will ask students to stay at home until 8.45am. Again, we will also text this information.

Then either:

- a. Messages will be updated at 8.45am to inform parents that the school will be closed for the day if the conditions continue to necessitate this action; N.B. This action may also be necessary if insufficient staff have been able to reach school owing to difficult travel conditions. The website and answer phone will be updated with progress reports and as soon as a decision is made about the school re-opening, then this will be publicised; **or**
- b. The website and answer phone will confirm that school will open as normal from 10am. Again, text messages of this information will be sent.

Important notes:

- If the school is to be closed, no students on site will be sent into adverse weather conditions without the reassurance of imminent secure parental care i.e. until they have parental permission to return home or to a responsible adult.
- Parents whose child has been off school should check the web site if the weather forecast predicts adverse conditions.

If The School is Open During Snowy Weather (a 'Snow Day'):

1. Before bringing children in to school, parents are asked to **ensure they have arrangements in place to collect the children from school early**, if the need arises.
2. Parents should ensure that the school has contact details on which they can be reached throughout the day. Most information will be relayed by text message where possible.
3. We may aim for the children to play outside in the snow if they wish, so please make sure they are well dressed for very cold weather.

If heavy snow falls during the day when the school is open:

1. If heavy snow falls when the children are already at the school and disruption is foreseeable, then parents should set off from their place of work or from home in plenty of time to ensure that they arrive at the school before the school closes.
2. It may be that parents are asked to pick children up early due to either problems with heating, or the need to close the school part way through the day to allow children and staff to get home safely before the weather deteriorates, please be alert for messages throughout the day.

Contact:

Our website www.stepgatesschool.co.uk should be consulted regularly and checked for updates. Additionally, Surrey County Council's website publishes up to date information on school closures and this can be accessed at www.surreycc.gov.uk/education . We will also endeavour to text message parents to ensure a clear message is sent. Please however, be aware that occasionally in bad weather, text messages can be delayed.

This document (Snow Policy) can be found on the school website and gives clear instructions for snow days.

Parents have to decide whether it is safe and desirable for them to make the journey into school. Please be mindful of local advice from the police and motoring organisations. If you decide not to travel and the school is open please contact the school and leave a message for the school secretary.

Arrival and Collection:

If children arrive late it is important that children sign in and register at the front office.

School will close at the usual time, but should the decision be made to close

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earlier, parents will be notified in the usual way.

There will be no after school activities, games, clubs on 'Snow Days'. Breakfast club will be open **if possible** dependent upon staff availability and travel conditions.

Parents of children due to attend The After School Club at 326 need to contact them to confirm whether they will be open on a 'Snow Day'.

Review due:

Spring 2027