

ST GEORGE' S CATHOLIC SCHOOL



School Closure Procedure

Severe weather and other emergencies

2017-2018

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St George's Catholic School will only close if the buildings or grounds are not safe, if the school is not adequately heated or routes home for children are threatened.

Adverse weather conditions

In times of adverse weather, such as snow, heavy rain and high winds, pupils are encouraged to:

- Wear suitable footwear e.g. wellington boots on their way to and from school and bring their school shoes to change into once in school
- Bring a change of clothing and additional warm clothing such as a tracksuit, jumper, trousers, extra socks, extra gloves, a hat and scarf
- Bring a substantial snack plus a packed lunch as it is possible that the delivery of our schools meals may be delayed or cancelled

The headteacher will take the decision as to whether after school clubs and activities will run and if the decision is made to close the school early then all after school activities and the after school clubs will be cancelled.

Closure before the start of the school day due to severe weather

In the case of severe weather, any decision whether or not to close the school will be taken as early as possible. The Headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors and make the decision about whether the school will remain open.

In the event of disruption caused by heavy snow the prime concern will always be the safety and wellbeing of the pupils and staff.

Each school closure will be reviewed on a daily basis after reassessment of the conditions of the site and the surrounding area and after taking advice from other professionals.

If the school is closed before the school day starts parents/carers will be informed in the following ways:

Primary means of communicating

- A message will appear on the school's website (www.st-georges-somerset.org.uk) by 8:00 am each day. The website will be updated with information, as far as possible, during the day.
- Information will be published on the Somerset County Council SLP website www.slp.somerset.org.uk under school closures
- Broadcasts by the following Radio Stations –

BBC – Somerset Sound. 95.5 FM, 1566 MHz
Heart FM. 102.6 FM, 96.5 FM
Breeze FM 100.8 FM, 102.4 FM or 107.4 FM
Tone FM 107.8 FM

Secondary means of communication

- Text messages and/or e-mails will be sent to all parents/carers shortly after 8:00am.

If parents/carers do not receive information from any of these sources to the contrary, they should assume that school will be open as usual.

Parents/carers are asked not to phone the school so the telephone lines can be kept clear for staff. Once parents/carers hear that the school is to be closed, it is always helpful if they contact other parents/carers they know to ensure that the message gets through effectively.

Important notes: Actual delivery of emails and SMS messages is beyond the control of the school. In severe weather conditions communication systems may be adversely affected.

Closure during the school day

The school's priority is to keep all pupils safe. If the school has to be closed during the school day, the school will begin a procedure for contacting parents/carers as soon as possible when it is decided that the school is being closed. This will be done through text alerts as well as the school website and through contacting local radio stations and posting on the Somerset County Council website.

When the school is closed during the day, our priority is to ensure the safety of the children on the school site whilst waiting to be collected and that they get home safely. All pupils will only be allowed to leave with a responsible adult, this includes year 5 and year 6 children.

Once parents/carers have been contacted we ask that they come to school or make arrangements for their child/children to be collected immediately. The school will stay open for as long as possible and, although there may not be enough teachers to teach lessons, supervised activities will be provided in the hall so that children can remain in school.

Decisions to close the school

The decision to close the school is a serious one. The main consideration will always be the health and safety of the children and staff. Parents/carers should be aware that all schools are different and can be affected in different ways, depending on whether children come to school by bus or whether staff live a long way away etc.

Gritting Policy

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure their own safety. This is particularly important when there is a chance that an area may be slippery such as during periods of cold weather and/or snow when there is a danger of ice having formed.

At St George's Catholic School we will be clearing paths and gritting as necessary.

If this gritting has not been completed before parents/carers, pupils, staff and visitors arrive then extreme caution must be exercised when moving from parked vehicles to treated paths.

It is not practical to grit large areas of ground therefore if it is thought that playground areas are unsafe due to underfoot conditions they will not be used during the day.

At the end of the day if the playgrounds are considered unsafe children will be directed to use the gritted pathways to their relevant exits. The supervision of pupils collected on the playground is the responsibility of parents/carers once they have been dismissed by teachers.

It may be possible for paths to have become unsafe during the day when there is no caretaking cover available to grit the paths. It is therefore very important that extreme care is taken when entering and exiting the schools premises later in the day.

Paths and roads outside the school gates are outside the school's area of responsibility.