

## **Juniper Hill School Snow Procedures**

It is very difficult to accurately predict the effect of snow on a school day. Decisions made with the best of intentions early in the day may become irrelevant depending on changes of the weather. It is rare that the decision to close the school is without some ambiguity but the decision is always made with the safety of both pupils and staff the only consideration.

Physically Juniper Hill is in a vulnerable position during snowy weather. For those that live outside the village of Flackwell Heath, the approach to and from the school is inevitably via a very steep hill. Key concerns are that parents are able to collect their children and return home safely with them and that our staff (particularly those that live a significant distance away) are able to make their commute in safety.

In the event of likely heavy snowfall the local authority will send a warning to the school which is linked to the Met Office Severe Weather warnings.

When this occurs, the Senior Leadership Team will evaluate the warning and decide on a course of action. If the met office is indicating an amber or red warning then the timings of the warning become critical.

If heavy snow is forecast overnight, this will be communicated to parents, warning them that the school may have to take action. The head teacher will then review the situation between 5 and 6am, and after consultation with the Chair of Governors, a decision will be made regarding the status of the school for the day. There are a number of options that are available to us:

- The school may open later to allow roads to become passable and for traffic to ease.
- The school may only open certain classes if some members of staff are unable to travel to school.
- The school may close early as significant snow is forecast during the afternoon and we need to ensure that pupils and staff are able to travel safely.
- The school will close as we have concerns that it is not safe for pupils and staff to travel to and from school.

It may be that we combine a number of options in order to try and keep the school open for as long as possible.

We appreciate that closing the school has a significant impact on families, and this is a decision that we will take only as a last resort. We will review the available staff and make a decision based on the information we have. We will look at the number of qualified teachers that are able to make the journey and the number of support staff and school leaders. If we feel that we do not have enough staff to manage the school then we will close.

Whatever action we decide to take, we will communicate this to families as early as we can, before 7am if at all possible. Hopefully this should allow childcare arrangements to be made if needed. We will communicate the information through our normal Parentmail structures, by both e-mail and text, so please pay close attention to these on a snowy morning. We will also log any changes to the school day under the School Closures section of the Bucks County Council website - this will trigger information to be broadcast on BBC 3 Counties radio.

In the event of unexpected and heavy snowfall during the school day, we may contact you in order to close the school early. If this is the case then please do not worry. We will make sure that all children are cared for until they are collected. Unless it is urgent please do not call the school as we will need to keep our lines free. If you feel that you need to collect your child but we have not notified you that we need to close then please report to the school office and ask us to bring you your child.

As soon as we are able to make a decision regarding the following day at school we will inform parents through these structures. If we are closed or operating on a reduced staff please use the information that we have sent out and refrain from calling the school if at all possible. Phone calls tie up the phone lines and members of staff at a time when we will often have to be making urgent calls.

We appreciate that snow can disproportionately affect schools and that the actions we take can have significant consequences for families. We also know that on occasion decisions made with the best of intentions may not, due to changes in the weather, seem as appropriate after the event. Staff and governors will make the decisions with the best of intentions and support from parents during this process is greatly appreciated.