Mickleton Primary School



School Closure and Adverse Weather Policy

Approved by:	FGB	**Date:**	Sept 2026
Next review due by:	Sept 2027		

1. Statement of Intent

Mickleton Primary School is committed to providing continuity of education wherever it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so. The school recognises the importance of maintaining educational provision, safeguarding and support for families during periods of adverse weather and other emergency situations.

The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open. Closure will only occur where a risk assessment determines that the school cannot operate safely or fulfil its statutory duties to pupils, staff and visitors.

This policy sets out:

- The circumstances under which the school may close.
- The decision-making process for school closure.
- Arrangements for communication with parents and staff.
- Procedures for maintaining safety during adverse weather.
- Expectations regarding attendance.
- Arrangements for remote education where appropriate.
- Emergency response procedures.

---

2. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident and Emergency Plan
- Snow, Ice and Severe Weather Risk Assessment
- Remote Education Arrangements
- Business Continuity Procedures

---

3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- Department for Education emergency planning and response guidance
- Department for Education attendance guidance
- Gloucestershire County Council emergency and severe weather guidance

- Current safeguarding and health and safety requirements applicable to schools

---

4. Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Determining whether the school remains open or closes.
- Undertaking or commissioning a dynamic risk assessment.
- Consulting relevant staff where practicable.
- Communicating closure decisions.
- Ensuring appropriate emergency arrangements are implemented.
- Liaising with Gloucestershire County Council where required.
- Reviewing this policy annually.

1.2 Site Manager

The Site Manager is responsible for:

- Assessing site conditions.
- Carrying out gritting and snow-clearing activities.
- Maintaining stocks of salt and equipment.
- Reporting hazards and site concerns promptly.
- Supporting the completion of risk assessments.

1.3 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Following health and safety procedures.
- Reporting hazards immediately.
- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Making reasonable efforts to attend work safely.
- Supporting emergency arrangements when required.

1.4 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Keeping emergency contact details up to date.
- Monitoring school communications.
- Ensuring children are suitably dressed for weather conditions.
- Making arrangements to collect their child if early closure is necessary.
- Following instructions issued by the school during emergencies.

5. Principles for School Closure

The school's default position is that it will remain open.

The Headteacher will not close the school simply because conditions are difficult, inconvenient or challenging.

Closure will only be considered where:

- Risks cannot be reduced to an acceptable level through reasonable control measures.
- The school cannot operate safely.
- The school's statutory responsibilities cannot be fulfilled.

The existence of snow, ice, heavy rainfall, high temperatures or travel disruption does not automatically justify school closure.

---

6. Circumstances That May Result in School Closure

The school may close where one or more of the following apply.

1.5 Unsafe Site Conditions

Closure may occur where:

- Ice, snow, flooding or storm damage presents a significant risk of injury.
- Paths, entrances and evacuation routes cannot be made safe.
- Buildings become unsafe to occupy.
- Trees or structures pose a danger to occupants.
- Significant hazards remain despite reasonable mitigation measures.

1.6 Insufficient Staffing

Closure may be necessary where staffing levels are insufficient to:

- Safeguard pupils appropriately.
- Meet statutory supervision requirements.
- Provide suitable first aid coverage.
- Operate the school safely.

Before closure is considered, the school will explore:

- Combining classes.
- Redeployment of available staff.

- Adapted timetables.
- Restricted use of parts of the site.

1.7 Utility Failure

Closure may be necessary where there is a significant failure of:

- Heating systems.
- Electrical supply.
- Water supply.
- Sewerage systems.
- Fire detection systems.
- Communication systems.

and safe operation cannot be maintained.

1.8 Access Issues

Closure may occur where:

- Access roads are unsafe.
- Emergency services cannot reasonably access the site.
- Significant access risks exist for pupils, staff or visitors.

The inability of a small number of pupils or staff to travel safely would not normally justify closure of the whole school.

1.9 Public Health Emergencies or Major Incidents

The school may close or partially close where advised by:

- Emergency services.
- Public health authorities.
- Gloucestershire County Council.
- Relevant government agencies.

Examples include:

- Severe weather emergencies.
- Environmental hazards.
- Utility emergencies.
- Major incidents affecting the local community.

---

7. Decision-Making Process

Where adverse weather or another emergency occurs:

1. The Site Manager will assess the site as early as possible.
2. A risk assessment will be completed.
3. The Headteacher will consider:
    - Site safety.
    - Building safety.
    - Staffing levels.
    - Weather forecasts.
    - Advice from relevant agencies.
    - Emergency access arrangements.
4. The Headteacher will make the final decision.

In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will assume these responsibilities.

Where possible, a decision will be made before the start of the school day.

---

8. Communication of Closure Decisions

If the school closes or has delayed opening arrangements, the school will communicate this through:

- Email
- Seesaw
- The school website
- Social media channels, where used

Where applicable, Gloucestershire County Council will also be informed.

Parents should not assume the school is closed unless confirmation has been received from the school.

---

9. Early Closure During the School Day

In exceptional circumstances the school may need to close after the school day has commenced.

Where this occurs:

- Parents will be informed as quickly as possible.
- Children will remain supervised until collected.
- The school will only release children to authorised adults.
- Safeguarding arrangements will always remain in place.

An early closure will only occur when continuing to operate would present a significant risk to health, safety or welfare.

---

10. Remaining Open During Adverse Weather

Where the school remains open:

- Routes will be cleared and gritted where practicable.
- Unsafe areas may be cordoned off.
- Outdoor activities may be restricted.
- Break and lunchtime arrangements may be adapted.
- The playground may be closed.
- Alternative indoor arrangements may be implemented.

The school recognises that risks cannot always be removed entirely and that health and safety law requires risks to be managed rather than eliminated.

---

11. Gritting and Snow Clearance

The Site Manager will:

- Prioritise key pedestrian routes.
- Treat entrances and emergency exits.
- Maintain adequate stocks of salt and equipment.
- Inspect treated areas regularly.
- Record gritting activities where appropriate.

Areas that remain unsafe will be:

- Clearly signed.
- Restricted from use.
- Cordoned off if necessary.

---

12. Attendance During Adverse Weather

Where the school remains open, parents are expected to make reasonable efforts to ensure their child attends.

The Headteacher will consider local conditions and individual circumstances when determining whether an absence related to severe weather should be authorised.

Where the school is officially closed:

- Absence will not be recorded against attendance statistics.
- Parents will not be expected to send children to school.

Parents should notify the school whenever severe weather prevents attendance.

---

13. Remote Education

If closure is expected to extend beyond a short period, the school will take reasonable steps to provide remote learning opportunities.

Arrangements may include:

- Learning activities through Seesaw.
- Online resources.
- Pre-prepared learning materials.
- Teacher-directed tasks.

The type and quantity of remote education will depend on:

- The reason for closure.
- The anticipated length of closure.
- Staff availability.
- Access to technology.

Remote education supports continuity of learning but does not replicate normal classroom provision.

---

14. Health and Safety

The school owes a duty of care to pupils, staff, visitors and contractors.

Reasonable measures will be taken to:

- Identify hazards.
- Assess risk.
- Implement control measures.
- Maintain safe access routes.
- Monitor changing conditions.

Individuals also have a responsibility to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others.

People who believe conditions are unsafe should immediately report concerns to the Headteacher or Site Manager.

Closing the school is a reasonable and proportionate response where a risk assessment identifies that pupils, staff or visitors would be exposed to an unacceptable level of risk that cannot be mitigated through reasonable control measures.

---

15. Emergency Planning

The school maintains an emergency plan that includes:

- Emergency contact details.
- Communication procedures.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- First aid arrangements.
- Evacuation procedures.
- Business continuity arrangements.
- Safeguarding arrangements.

Appropriate staff will receive training relevant to their emergency responsibilities.

---

16. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will review this policy annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- National guidance changes.
- Significant incidents identify a need for review.
- Changes occur to school procedures or emergency arrangements.

The Governing Board will review the policy as part of its cycle of policy monitoring and approval.

Key Principle

Mickleton Primary School will only close when a risk assessment determines that the school cannot operate safely, cannot adequately safeguard pupils, or cannot fulfil its statutory duties due to unsafe site conditions, insufficient staffing, critical utility failure, access issues, or advice from emergency authorities. The school will remain open whenever risks can be managed safely and reasonably.