



Ely St Mary's C of E Junior School

High Barns, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4RB

Tel: 01353 662163

Email: office@esm.school

enquiries@esm.school

(Absence, Dinners, Uniform, Clubs, Medicines, Contact Details, School Pick-up)

Website: www.elystmarys.org.uk

4th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

What follows is our plan in the event of snow to ensure that we can keep the school open as much as possible. Although the children look forward to a 'snow day', we appreciate it is a great inconvenience and has a detrimental effect on the learning of the children. Whenever possible we will keep the school open, but we must also be realistic about health and safety issues.

Making the school site safe for children, parents, and staff

Within school, it is our obligation to provide safe pathways; this takes up a lot of time, manpower and resources and, if we are to remain open, we need to be realistic in our management of this. The key considerations for our school when identifying whether we can open are:

- Do our risk assessments identify that it is safe for children and staff to be on the school site?
- Can we provide safe access on to, and out of, our school by clearing suitable pathways (considering whether we have the means and workforce to do it in a safe and timely manner)?

If we can answer yes to both questions then we can safely open, however parents and children still have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that does not put themselves or anyone else in danger.

Going forward our snow plan is as follows:

Who will decide if the school opens and how will parents know?

The Head always makes a decision daily about whether the school will be able to open. The main factor is whether enough staff can manage to get to work from their respective homes. If there is a decision to close, this will be posted on the school website (address as above), Class Dojo and announced on local radio stations such as Heart/Star FM/BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. As there are several schools with 'St Mary's' in their names, the radio station would be requested to refer to our school by its full name of 'Ely St Mary's C of E Junior School' so as to avoid any confusion. Where possible we would, in addition, send out a message using our email and text communication system. Please do not telephone the school in such circumstances unless this is absolutely necessary. If no notice - the school is open.

How will you decide which pathways can be cleared?

If we are to open, we have to be realistic about the number of paths that can be cleared before the start of the school day. For this reason, we will, on snow days and when the playground is exceptionally icy, reduce the entrances in and around the school, but will continue to allow children to come straight into school upon arrival, to avoid a rush at 8:55am. The main path from the road to Reception will be cleared. As all pupils will be using this route, please allow extra time.

The pathway cleared will allow access to school via the external Hall door (Years 3&4) and the main Reception (Years 5&6); it is not possible to manage paths to all entrances.

How will the school manage the whole school coming through one entrance and keep infection control measures in place?

We will operate a 'drop and go' system using the short one-way loop in the area of the Staff Car Park. All parents/carers and pupils will be requested to enter the school site via the main pedestrian gate adjacent to the Staff Car Park, to follow the footpath towards Reception, to release pupils outside of Reception. Parents/carers will leave the school site via the vehicular gate to the Staff Car Park.

Will more pathways be open by the end of the day?

We hope, by the end of the day, to have had time to grit a pathway around the school, and to have cleared paths to both usual entrances, so as to be able to operate our usual pick-up arrangements. We will, however, let you know in the event that revisions are necessary, and staff will be on hand to help.

What will happen if there is heavy snow during the day and the school needs to shut?

In the event of this situation, the Headteacher will take advice from the Trust before making the decision to close. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible, so that children can be collected safely. This would be through Text and Class Dojo – please make sure you have provided the school with your correct contact details and join Class Dojo if you haven't already done so.

Are there any other considerations that parents need to be aware of?

During periods of inclement weather, children (and adults) need to wear appropriate sensible footwear and waterproof clothing to help avoid slipping and to be dressed for enjoying the snow. On snowy days, parents may wish to consider sending in a spare pair of shoes to be worn inside, as well as a spare pair of socks and gloves just in case.

We hope parents and carers will support this practical approach. Once open the school will operate normally, and risk assessments will be completed each playtime to assess whether the snow is okay for playing in, or too slushy or icy.

Many thanks for your support,

Miss Clarke
Interim Headteacher

Mr Clive Jeffries
Chair of Governors

