

Newton Tony CE VC Primary School	
Snow Closure and Gritting Policy	
Policy agreed	January 2018
Policy review	January 2019

Newton Tony CE VC Primary School recognises that it has a responsibility to provide employees, pupils and others who enter the premises with a safe environment in which to work and learn. The school is committed to complying with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other regulations that require, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe means of access to and egress from the premises.

During the winter the risk of injury from slips, trips and falls is increased by the presence of snow and ice, especially at the start of the school day, on foot paths and other areas of pedestrian traffic.

**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.

#### **Procedure**

The school will take the following steps to ensure safe access and egress during inclement weather, when the risks of injury from slip and trip accidents is increased due to snow and ice: The school will treat specific access routes as detailed below ideally the evening before, if there is good reason to believe that local conditions would otherwise be hazardous due to snow and ice. It is acknowledged that the school will not always have prior knowledge of inclement weather conditions.

The Head Teacher/ Member of staff or Site Cleaner will clear and/or grit access routes as identified in the site plan either the evening before or as soon as possible on the morning of inclement weather. This will occur, **if reasonably practicable**, before the arrival of other staff and pupils.

It is not practical to grit large areas of grounds therefore if it is thought that playground areas are unsafe due to underfoot conditions they will not be used during the day. The Head Teacher or member of staff on duty will determine if the area is safe to be used.

It may be possible for paths to have become unsafe during the day. It is therefore very important that extreme care is taken when coming on to the school premises later in the day. Whilst every effort will be made to clear snow and ice it must be remembered that individuals have a responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This means being aware of the potential hazards of walking or driving in icy conditions and acting reasonably in the circumstances. Paths outside the school are outside the school's area of responsibility – if they are dangerous we will alert the Highways department to the situation and request their attention.

The school will review the effectiveness of the winter gritting policy before each winter or if circumstances change.

The following areas will be gritted (as shown on the attached site plan):

- Path from Childrens' entrance gate at the back of the school to the back door
- Path leading from front side gate to front door of school

The following areas will not be gritted:

- Playground
- Path around the village hall
- Village hall terrace
- Car park

In severe conditions , only the front entrance will be in use and every effort will be made to clear a pathway from the front side gate to the front door.

### **School Closure – Adverse Weather Conditions**

In the event that we need to close the school due to bad weather, we will do the following:

- Head Teacher will aim to make a final decision by 7am. Staff will be contacted following the information on our emergency contact diagram
- Communicate the decision by Teachers2Parents– this relies on the school having up-to-date mobile telephone numbers
- Communicate the decision on the school website
- Communicate the decision through Spire FM

All attempts will be made to open the school as soon as possible and decisions on re-opening will be communicated by Teachers2Parents and School website.

In deciding whether it is feasible to open the school, the following factors are amongst those considered:

- Parents, pupils and staff being able to travel to and from school safely
- We will also consider, a predicted significant snowfall during a period when the school is open and pupils and staff are already on site
- Sufficient staffing to give safe pupil:staff ratios
- Providing a safe and reasonably comfortable internal environment
- Ensuring the school has safe routes around the site to minimise the danger of slipping and injury.

### **Wiltshire Council Guidance**

#### Gritting

A regular source of accidents and liability claims is slips and falls during icy conditions. With regards to gritting on or around your site, it is vital that the school adheres to its own local policy. Our general guidance is to ensure a path from the school boundary to the main entrance is gritted for pedestrian access. Car parks may be gritted but it is acceptable to have a policy stating car parks are not gritted. For larger schools with several access points for pedestrians it is necessary to state within your policy which

access points will be gritted and which will not. This information should be communicated in good time to all staff, parents and, where they are likely to be unaccompanied by parents, to pupils and students too.

Wiltshire Council highways team operate a scheme to provide a salt bin and salt so that schools can treat their footways and carparks. There is a charge for the service. The team can also provide training on the most efficient way to spread salt to make it as effective as possible. For further advice please contact the Highways Team via [Weather.team@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Weather.team@wiltshire.gov.uk)

If you are planning on gritting bear in mind:

- Salt must be kept dry otherwise it will go hard and form a thick crust and can be a challenge to remove from salt bins.
- You only need to spread a tablespoon's worth of salt per sq/m, for it to be effective.
- The council does not treat all roads leading to schools.
- Most DIY outlets now sell salt which may be the answer for your basic needs.
- See our website for roads we do treat on a precautionary basis.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwaysstreetcare/gritting/grittingroutesmap.htm>

### School closures

It is a local school decision about whether the school must be closed for health and safety reasons in the event of extreme weather. Local variations in weather, routes and access can mean that one school needs to close whilst another nearby can remain open so it is important to make your own decision based on your own local circumstances and not to simply follow the lead of other schools. It is for these local variation reasons that the local authority itself cannot determine for you whether any or all schools should close.

You have advice in the local authority's "Emergency Conditions and Major Incidents Guidance" and there are three core safety issues that you should particularly consider:

1. Are you able to have enough staff get to site to be able to safely supervise the number of pupils/students you expect? Having fewer than normal staff is acceptable provided you are able to manage that risk by modifying the normal school activities accordingly. Note: it is reasonable to expect staff to travel in difficult circumstances, and only not to when there is a significant and exceptional adverse risk.
2. Are you able to provide a safe and **reasonably** comfortable internal environment? Internal temperatures should not fall below 18C as a guide unless physical activity is being undertaken. It may take a little time to reach this minimum temperature and allowances should be made for this to happen. The absence of any outside break time is acceptable for short durations of extreme weather.
3. Are staff and pupils/students able to get to and around the site **reasonably** safely? Take into account the condition of local access roads and pavements and the normal access routes across the site. It is acceptable to restrict points of access to the school site as per the gritting advice above.

If you can answer YES to each of these three questions, then the school should remain open subject to any other over-riding safety factor.