

# Larwood School

## SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

### ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF, PARENTS AND TRANSPORT STAFF

This advice and guidance is to make clear and consistent the expectations of school to staff, parents, carers and transport staff in the event of severe and adverse weather conditions. The intention is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all concerned.

The school will make every effort to make decisions about school closure based upon the best information available at the time. Risk assessments will need to be carried out and decisions made following these assessments. Larwood School receives pupils from across the whole of Hertfordshire and obviously weather conditions may well be different in other parts of the county. It follows that parents, carers and transport staff will need to make their own risk assessment in their local area, based upon the best information available to them.

#### PARENTS AND CARERS

If your child is at home and the weather conditions locally to you are severe, then you must decide first of all if you wish your child to be leaving home. It is your right to keep your child at home even if the school is open and the taxis are available, if you consider it unsafe for your child to be travelling. I would ask you to communicate this decision to the taxi driver and the school as soon as you are able.

#### TRANSPORT STAFF, DRIVERS AND ESCORTS

Firstly, your commitment to meet your obligation to transport the children safely to and from school is acknowledged, appreciated and unquestioned.

If however the weather conditions locally to you and /or where you know you have to travel, are severe, then you will naturally make your own risk assessment of the situation and make a professional decision as to whether it is safe to travel or not. I would also ask that you consider the likelihood of getting the children home safely in the afternoon if you are able to bring them into school in the morning.

I know that you already make every effort to keep parents and the school informed of decisions and changes and that this will continue.

#### SCHOOL

If before the start of school in the morning, weather conditions in Stevenage are severe, the school will make a risk assessment of the situation and determine if the school is to be open. We will make this decision as early as possible and will firstly communicate this decision to taxi operators and drivers and then we will contact all parents. The importance of having up to date contact telephone numbers is obvious.

If the children are in school and the weather becomes severe during the school day, then we will again make a risk assessment of the situation based on local information and the weather forecasts, and make a decision as to getting children home safely while it remains safe to do so. This may well mean closing the school early.

Taxi operators will be contacted and parents will be contacted as soon as we are able, following the decision to close the school.

If the school is to be closed but boarders are already in school, then we will make every effort to get those children home safely. Keeping children in school will always be dependent upon the availability of staff who themselves may have difficulty getting into school as some travel a considerable distance.

#### SCHOOL STAFF

In the event of severe conditions, school staff should consider the school open unless a specific communication of closure has been received. Staff will need to make their own risk assessment of the situation based upon local information and determine if it is safe to travel. It is expected that school staff make every effort to attend school if the school is open and if children are already in school as boarders. It is also expected that staff make every effort to come to school later if conditions have improved.

The school will make every effort to contact you in advance of your travel if the school is to be closed and all children are already at home. Similarly the school will take into account the need for staff to get home, particularly those with young families, if the weather becomes severe during the school day. It is appreciated that many staff do make themselves available to remain in school until children have been able to get home.

Nicolas Newman