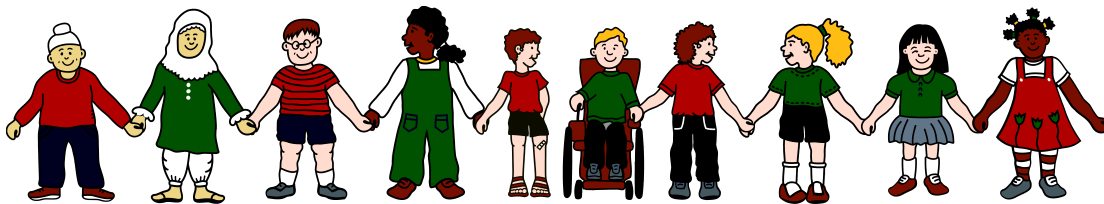


THE GILES NURSERY AND INFANTS' SCHOOL



Snow and Ice Guidance

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Snow and Ice Guidance

Introduction

1. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act place a responsibility upon schools, as with other establishments, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure a safe means of access and egress from its premises.
2. It is a myth that if an attempt is made to clear snow/ ice and someone slips that schools are more likely to be subject to claims than if they did nothing at all. **As with any other risk the true position is that schools can be held liable for 'failing to act reasonably' in order to prevent accidents.**
3. Heads of establishments are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to minimise the risks from snow and ice within the boundaries of the school. Thus, a proportionate and prioritised approach should be taken to the clearance and treatment of routes within the school site.
4. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that the establishment remains open in the event of severe weather. The decision to close should be taken by the Headteacher based on local conditions and an assessment of risk.
5. Schools should follow their emergency response plan , see also [Severe weather and public emergency - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning \(thegrid.org.uk\)](#)

Risk Assessment

6. Headteachers and premises managers must ensure that a suitable risk assessment and planned response are in place in advance of severe weather, prioritising which routes will be cleared / treated.
7. That assessment should cover risks associated with entering and leaving the site / buildings as well as the safety of those undertaking the work (manual handling, clothing/ footwear, equipment etc.)
8. A generic risk assessment is available on the [Grid](#). Depending on the size and complexity of the site, then supplementing your risk assessment with a simple site plan showing the priority areas to be treated would be recommended.

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9. Consider colour coding the routes in levels of priority and if some pedestrian routes into the school should remain closed. E.g., red routes must be cleared and made safe by x am.
10. The prioritisation of routes to be cleared first should be based on the risk of slipping, tripping, or falling. The route from the main site entrance to the main building entrance (about one metre wide) should be considered first.
11. Routes between school buildings should then be given priority, where those buildings are to be used.
12. School site plans are available to download via the corporate property database on Technology Forge <https://tfcloud-hertfordshire.technologyforge.com/>.
13. All staff should be aware of the risk assessment / plan in place for severe weather and take responsibility for ensuring designated paths and access routes are utilised.
14. Where schools remain open inspections of paths and walkways should be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local arrangements for clearing and salting when further ice or snow appears.
15. **Internal routes** During adverse weather, the risks of slips and falls inside the school will also be increased due to flooring becoming wet.
16. Staff should monitor the condition of internal floors, replace wet matting / use additional matting as necessary and undertake additional mopping if required, particularly on or near steps and stairs.

Clearing snow and ice

17. As a guide to the typical arrangements which should be in place:
 - Staff to be aware of their duties and responsibilities, it may be necessary for site staff to start work earlier on a particular day to commence a clearance / gritting plan.
 - Ensure adequate equipment is available (including rock salt, sand/grit).
 - Commence snow clearance as early as possible before it becomes compacted by people walking over it.
 - Car park users should be warned about the hazards of snow / ice when using areas that have not been cleared.

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- A route 1m wide should initially be cleared from the school gate to the main entrance.
- Once a path has been cleared rock salt should be used to assist with the prevention of ice (where temperatures remain below freezing treat cleared paths with a mixture of rock salt and grit/ sharp sand).
- Thereafter (as soon as practically possible) clear and treat similar paths between the main school building and other blocks, mobiles etc.
- Other routes into the school may then be cleared and opened for use as and when possible.
- Paths should be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure their continued safety.
- Cleared paths should continue to be treated on a regular basis until the risk of ice has passed.
- Additional care should be taken with sloping pathways and steps. A mixture of salt and grit/ sharp sand should be used to treat such surfaces (if the area does freeze again, has the advantage of leaving a residue, which provides a grip on surfaces).
- Where the Headteacher or premises manager has concerns over the safety of certain, routes, playgrounds etc, those areas may need to be taken out of use. If this is the case this must be clearly communicated to all staff, pupils, parents, and visitors. (If necessary, use signs/cones/tape to reinforce this).

16. **Use of Volunteers** -There are no health and safety reasons which would prevent schools from enlisting the help of volunteers to assist them in clearing routes to school following heavy snowfall.

17. The school would still owe them a duty of care and retain a co-ordination and supervision role, it would be for the individual volunteer to decide if they feel able to undertake the activity safely and to ensure they wear suitable clothing and footwear.

Outdoor Play

18. There is a balance to be struck between the risks and benefits of offering children play opportunities, the fact that there has been snowfall does not preclude pupils from playing outdoors.

19. Sensible judgements by Headteachers are all that is generally required in such circumstances to ensure pupils are not exposed to **significant** risk.

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20. For example, schools may decide to stagger playtimes or increase levels of supervision, ensuring pupils are aware of any specific rules (e.g. no throwing of ice balls) and have appropriate clothing and footwear.

Routes to school

21. It is not practical to undertake salting on footways, or roads, to all schools in the County. Those schools serving the highest numbers of pupils are those most likely to be serviced by scheduled bus services or high usage footways so are likely to receive pre or post salting.

22. Live salting information for Hertfordshire's roads is available [online](#) or via [X](#) (twitter.com/herts_highways)

23. Problems with Hertfordshire's roads can be reported by visiting <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx>

See this link for further guidance/advice from the Health and Safety Executive.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/slips-trips-bad-weather.htm>