

Inwoods Small School

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY - INWOODS SMALL SCHOOL

Last Review Date	August 2024
Policy endorsed by	The Trustees and School Management Committee
Policy is maintained by	Inwoods Coordinator
Next review date	August 2025
Review body	The Facilities Manager

Introduction

This policy focuses on the impact that adverse and extreme weather may have upon Inwoods Small School's daily operations and what action to take should there be doubt or concern regarding the safety of opening the school.

All information gathered to inform decisions should be sourced from the MET Office in collaboration with the staff knowledge of the school site.

High Wind

High winds can pose risks, primarily due to the nature of our being situated within woodland beneath trees that can be affected by wind-speed/force. A number of factors should be considered when assessing the potential risk of forecasted or observed winds: topography; the variety, age and species of trees; soil type; infrastructure; onsite facilities; (all of which have been considered in the following information). The school commissions regular tree surveys to ensure we have up to date information on the trees on site.

When assessing wind-speed forecasts, the staff should rely upon forecasts given by the MET Office. Other forecasters can be used to gain an idea of the spectrum of forecasted wind, but ultimately the MET Office forecast should determine any action that needs to be taken.

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MET office forecasts are issued in MPH (miles per hour). The MET office will forecast an hourly average wind-speed as well as the highest gust in any given hour. Details can be found at www.metoffice.gov.uk.

These should be used in conjunction with the Beaufort scale to achieve insight into expected conditions in the woodland. The Beaufort scale is as follows;

Force	Miles Per Hour	Description	Specification for use on land
0	0 to 1	Calm	Calm; smoke rises vertically
1	1 to 3	Light air	Direction of wind shown by smoke drift, but not by wind vanes
2	4 to 7	Light breeze	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle, ordinary vanes moved by wind
3	8 to 12	Gentle breeze	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; wind extends a light flag
4	13 to 18	Moderate breeze	Raises dust and loose paper; small branches are moved.
5	19 to 24	Fresh breeze	Small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters.
6	25 to 31	Strong breeze	Large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty.
7	32 to 38	Near gale	Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking against the wind.
8	39 to 46	Gale	Gale Breaks twigs off trees; generally impedes progress.
9	47 to 54	Severe gale	Slight structural damage occurs (chimney-pots and slates removed).
10	55 to 63	Storm	Seldom experienced inland; trees uprooted; considerable structural damage occurs.
11	66 to 72	Violent storm	Very rarely experienced; accompanied by wide-spread damage.

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12	73 to 83	Hurricane	Very rarely experienced; accompanied by wide-spread damage.
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The following table dictates when the school may be closed as a result of actual/forecasted wind speed.

Wind including Gusts.	<31 mph (force 6)	32-39 mph (force 7/8)	40-46 mph(force 8)	47- 54 mph (force 9)
	Fine to run with no issue.	Fine to run, though be aware of the impact of higher gusts when outside.	<p>If the wind is gusting above 40 mph focus the majority of the learning in the classrooms.</p> <p>If winds are consistently above 46 mph then all learning will be inside or we will consider closing the school for the day based on the risk assessment of the conditions.</p>	If at any point winds reach or pass 54 mph, either consistently or in gusts we will consider closing the school for the day based on the risk assessment of the conditions.

Weather warnings and what they mean

YELLOW	Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of your day to day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation and yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days.
AMBER	There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you, which could potentially disrupt your plans and possibly cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office
RED	Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel and power

disruption and risk to life is likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.
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Further information can be found at www.metoffice.gov.uk/guide/weather/warnings

If the decision has been made to close the school, the parent/guardian should be contacted at the earliest reasonable convenience, preferably with at least 24 hours' notice from the specified beginning time of the school day. Should 24 hours' notice not be possible due to reasons outside of our control (a forecast that changes for the worse for example) then the parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as the decision is made.

Much of the assessment of whether or not to open the school will be made (preferably 24 hours) prior to the start of the school day commencing with the information provided by the MET Office. However, leading staff are in a position of duty to close the school with regards to safety at any point and should use their experience and judgement to inform this decision at the time of cancellation, whether school has begun or not.

Parents should also be part of the process for making the decision as to whether it is safe to travel to the school. They should refer to the weather warnings to help make an informed decision.

Heavy snow (enough to settle on the roads) - Low Temperature

A combination of low temperatures, snow and ice can lead to dangerous conditions at Inwoods. As staff we need to take into account the safety of our families, as well as ourselves, not only during the sessions, but also as they travel to and from our sites. Heavy snow will cause the roads to become dangerous, as well as the risk of people not being able to get to the school site. Very low temperatures during school can also pose a risk, especially to the children, and should be factored in. The correct clothing must be worn on days when the weather is frozen.

We may close the school due to heavy snow when;

- Heavy snow on school days may make the roads dangerous or inhibit the parents or staff being able to get to the school.
- Heavy snow the day before a school day where the temperature does not go above freezing during the night, causing the roads to freeze.
- Temperatures are below freezing, with a wind chill factor around the -5 to -10 range could be a cause for cancellation depending on the age of your children and how warm we can get the school buildings.

Other Extreme Weather

In the unlikely event of any unforeseen weather event such as flash-flooding, electrical storms, occurring whilst staff and children are on site, then the children will be kept in a building that is safe on the site until it is safe for their parents to come and collect them.

Remote Learning

If a school is closed part way through a day due to severe weather then the school will not set any specific work for the remaining time. If schools are closed for a full day or longer, the teachers will email suggestions of work that each class could be completing at home. This could be a continuation of their project work or activities relating to English, maths or science.