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# Snow policy & Procedure

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Policy reviewed by Headteacher  
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Signed

Headteacher

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL  
Egerton Street, Oldham. OL1 3SQ

# Snow Policy and Procedure

## The reality

School closings and delays during severe winter weather conditions can play havoc with both school and home schedules and are frustrating for all.

All schools suffer in this regard but Blue Coat suffers more than most due to its height above sea level (300m). Our site is on a steep slope with external pathways and steps linking separate buildings. The size and shape of the catchment area and the sheer distance some students travel adds to the complexity.

It is the areas to the east of the school that tend to suffer the most as the three major roads out of the town centre – Lees Road, Huddersfield Road and Ripponden Road – all have steep slopes at some point, which can lead to bus cancellations and road closures if the weather is severe.

## Our priority

We make every effort to stay open during conditions of adverse weather, but young people's safety, both on-site, and when travelling, is our priority.

## How school seeks to ensure your child's safety during severe weather

1. We take all possible steps to ensure that access to the site and the school is safe. The drives are cleared and gritted. Snowballing **is not** allowed.
2. We monitor weather forecasts closely and take advice from a range of agencies. Exceptionally the Headteacher has to decide in advance to close the school. Every effort is made to give notice the night before, but if conditions are worse than expected, the notice to close will be posted on the school website ([www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk](http://www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk)) and on Bloodle (<https://vle.blue-coat.org>) by 7.00am
3. Early dismissal. **Once students are in school, their safety is the school's responsibility.** Even if the weather is bad, it is often better to wait until the normal end of the school day so that pupils can travel home on the school buses.

**If, however, school's monitoring of weather conditions indicates that travel is becoming more difficult in some areas, pupils will be released early according to their snow zone.**

4. **Snow zones** are based on distance and level of accessibility. Each student is assigned a snow zone, based on their address. Details of the 4 zones can be found below. If weather conditions deteriorate during the course of the day, such that there is a greater risk in staying, pupils in the affected areas will be released in the course of the day. This information will be posted on the

website/Bloodle, and pupils affected will be given the opportunity to contact parents. **Other pupils must stay in school.**

## 5. Responsibilities of parents.

- 5.1 Parents must ensure that their son/daughter is properly dressed during bad weather – i.e. they have a coat, sensible shoes or boots (which are allowed during snow, but trainers are not).
- 5.2 Parents must ensure that students know how to get home if their normal bus service is disrupted, and that they have a Plan B to go to a friend or a relative until they can be collected/conditions ease.
- 5.3 Parents **must not** try to drive on to the school site. Our buildings are separate, and the roads are our corridors – students (and staff) move about throughout the day. At the best of times the movement of cars on site during the school day causes risk, and during bad weather it is dangerous.
- 5.4 **Parents must not be panicked by text messages from their children advising that, for example**
  - all public transport has ceased,
  - Lees/Saddleworth/Failsworth/Coppice is cut off,
  - they are the only pupil left in school.

We do our best to prevent children sending alarmist messages, but social media now has the same impact that a wasp used to have in the classroom of the 1980s – 1990s, i.e. it can cause danger through over-reaction. We monitor the situation very closely, and we will release pupils if the conditions make this necessary.

- 5.5 The law requires that children on the roll of a school must attend. However, if conditions in the morning are very severe in the home area, and transport is affected, the parent or guardian must make the decision about whether to send their child to school. In law, this has to be recorded an “unauthorised absence”. Once the pupils are in school, an early ‘dismissal’/ release is the responsibility of the school.
- 5.6 In the event of a school closure, ‘snow work’ will be posted on Bloodle by teachers to ensure that learning continues. We regret that this is not possible for individuals when school is open, and teachers are teaching.

### **In summary**

Please be assured that **we will not put the safety of your child, or any other, at risk. Please help us to do that by allowing us to manage the situation in school.**

## **Snow Zones**

### **Zone 1**

Coldhurst, St Mary's, Rhodes Bank, Mumps, Derker.

### **Zone 2**

Greenacres, Clarksfield, Royton, Westhulme, Chadderton, Nimble Nook, Hollins, Coppice, Glodwick, Alt, Cherry Tree Gardens, Hathershaw, Copsterhill, Watersheddings, Waterhead, Werneth, Northmoor, Garden Suburbs, Whitegate.

### **Zone 3**

Rushcroft, Shaw, Lees, High Crompton, Hanging Cheddar, Crompton Fold, Top O'th Knowl, Moss Hey, Bardsley, Failsworth, Hollinwood, Limeside, County End, Grotton, Holts, Springhead, Barrowshaw, Moorside, Sholver.

### **Zone 4**

Austerlands, Greenfield, Uppermill, Delph, Grains Bar, Dobcross, Diggle, Newhey, Milnrow, Rochdale, Heywood, Prestwich, Whitefield, Blackley, Higher Blackley, Moston, New Moston, Charlestown, Alkrington, Newton Heath, Stanycliffe, Boarshaw, Middleton, Ashton Under Lyne, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Stalybridge, Denton, Hyde, Gee Cross, Mottram, Audenshaw, Stockport, Glossop, Broadbottom, Woodhouses, Marsden.