



Ely St Mary's C of E Junior School

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(Absence, Dinners, Uniform, Clubs, Medicines, Contact Details, School Pick-up)

Website: www.elystmarys.org.uk

1st December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

What follows is our plan in the event of snow to ensure that we can keep the school open as much as possible. Although the children look forward to a 'snow day', we appreciate it is a great inconvenience and has a detrimental effect on the learning of the children. Whenever possible we will keep the school open, but we must also be realistic about health and safety issues.

In the event that the school were to have to close due to adverse weather, or for any other reason, there would be an expectation that pupils continue their learning at home, making use of the home-learning resources for their respective year-groups, which are to be found on St Mary's website:

https://www.elystmarys.org.uk/web/home_learning/459011. (You will need to select the appropriate year-group.)

Within school, it is our obligation to provide safe pathways; this takes up a lot of time, manpower and resources and, if we are to remain open, we need to be realistic in our management of this.

The key requirements for any school are these:

- we need to provide safe access on to, and out of, our school by clearing a pathway;
- there is no requirement for us to clear the playground if we do not have the means, manpower or money to do it;
- we carry out risk assessments to ascertain whether it is safe for children to be on the playground or field;
- we cannot allow parents to clear the site - it is an insurance issue;
- we are not expected to close as a result of snow as long as the above are fulfilled.

If all of these measures are in place, the responsibility lies with parents to keep themselves and their children safe.

Our plan is as follows:

1. The Head always makes a decision daily about whether the school will be able to open. The main factor is whether enough staff can manage to get to work from their respective homes. If there is a decision to close, this will be posted on the school website (address as above) and announced on local radio stations such as Heart/Star FM/BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. As there are several schools with 'St Mary's' in their names, the radio station would be requested to refer to our school by its full name of 'Ely St Mary's C of E Junior School' so as to avoid any confusion. Where possible we would, in addition, send out a message using our email and text communication system. Please do not telephone the school in such circumstances unless this is absolutely necessary. If no notice - the school is open.
2. If we are to open we have to be realistic about the amount of paths that can be cleared before the start of the school day. For this reason we will, on snow days and when the playground is exceptionally icy, reduce the entrances in and around the school, but will continue to allow children to come straight into school upon arrival, to avoid a rush at 8:55am. The main path from the road to Reception will be cleared. As all pupils will be using this route, please allow extra time.
3. The pathway cleared will allow access to school via the external Hall door (Years 3&4) and the main Reception (Years 5&6); it is not possible to manage paths to all entrances.
4. We will operate a 'drop and go' system using the short one-way loop in the area of the Staff Car Park. All parents/carers and pupils will be requested to enter the school site via the blue pedestrian gate adjacent to the Staff Car Park, to follow the footpath towards Reception, to release pupils outside of Reception, with Years 3 and 4 entering the school buildings through the

external Hall door, and Years 5 and 6 gaining access via the main Reception. Once inside, year-groups will branch off to their classrooms as per the diagram below. School staff will be on hand to direct them. Parents/carers will leave the school site via the vehicular gate to the Staff Car Park.

- Children (and adults) need to wear appropriate sensible footwear and waterproof clothing to help avoid slipping and to be dressed for enjoying the snow. On snow days, parents may wish to consider sending in a spare pair of shoes to be worn inside, as well as a spare pair of socks just in case.
- We hope, by the end of the day, to have had time to grit a pathway around the school, and to have cleared a path from the gates leading onto the Top Playground, and from the shared gate, so as to be able to operate our usual pick-up arrangements. We will, however, let you know in the event that revisions are necessary, and staff will be on hand to help.

We hope parents and carers will support this practical approach. Once here the school will operate normally, and risk assessments will be completed each playtime to assess whether the snow is okay for playing in, or too wet or icy.

Many thanks for your support,

Mrs Ireland-Curtis
Headteacher

Mr Clive Jeffries
Chair of Governors

