



Snow Procedures 2018-19

We have to prepare for the possibility of snow disruption this winter, therefore put together a 'Snow Plan' with opening our academy on a safe site being the key priority.

One of the greatest difficulties facing our school, is its location in Ventnor and large, sloping site. Additionally, our heating or water supplies could be affected and their failures force a closure. Therefore, please be aware that some decisions may effectively be taken out of our hands by circumstances other than just snowfall!

When we experience ice or snow, our first priority is to assess if we can make the site safe enough for children and adults to walk to the school buildings. Although we vigilantly keep up-to-date with forecasts and weather warnings, the snow and ice conditions can be quite localized, with freezing temperatures affecting some areas of the Island and not others. What appears to be 'slushy' snow can be compacted very quickly on frozen ground.

When we have assessed if the site can be made safe, we still have to ensure enough staff can get in to meet appropriate adult: child teaching ratios. With some staff living significant distances away, journeys must be safely achievable. When we are assured that we can make pathways accessible and have sufficient staff, we will open.

In the event of snow or ice being too difficult to clear from the whole site early in the morning we will clear the pavements around the car-park and pupils will enter / exit via the front doors to the school hall. The outside gates will be kept locked.

If there is heavy snow during the day we may have to close the school before bedtime in order for the children and staff to be able to travel home. We will use our texting service should this be necessary. We would ask that you collect your children as soon as possible but we will, of course, supervise all children until they can be collected.

Communication

Please cut this out and keep it somewhere safe:

- 1) **Isle of Wight Council** website will add to their website a list of schools and academies that are closed (or partially closed). Their website is <https://www.iwight.com/news/>
- 2) **Isle of Wight Radio** (who broadcast on 102 and 107 FM) will broadcast a list of schools that are closed or partially closed and also update their website which is <https://iwradio.co.uk/>
- 3) **Text:** We will send out a text message. Obviously if the snow is widespread there are many thousands of schools using the same network so it can take longer than usual for messages to get through. If you have changed your mobile phone recently and not told us your new number, or have not received any text messages from us recently, please contact the school office to provide us with your new details.
- 4) **Telephone:** If possible, a message will be left on the school answerphone as soon as is practicable. However, with limited lines available, the radio and websites should be the first place to check.
- 5) **Website:** If possible we will update the front page of our St Francis website with notification of closure / arrangements.

We may decide to have a staggered opening with pupils being allowed to arrive any time up to 9:30am. This allows those from slightly further away to get here safely but also spreads the amount of traffic in and around the site. We will always try to make a decision as early as possible and would hope to inform you by 7:30am in the morning if we are forced to close.

We have some snow clearing equipment and we would like to create a 'Snow Team' of volunteers who would be prepared to come into school to help clear paths, etc. The 'Snow Team' will be sent a text message and if they are able to, they could support the school staff in making our site safe and accessible. If you would like to be a volunteer, please fill in the slip at the bottom of the page. Due to health & safety restrictions, only adults who consider themselves fit and well enough to do so, will be able to join the snow team and come onto the site.

We will do everything we can to remain open. Rest assured that closing a school is never a decision taken lightly. We know that our decisions will never please everybody!

Mrs Perkins

Snow Team Volunteer Slip

I would like to volunteer for the St Francis Snow Team!

Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Email address: _____

Mobile Telephone Number: _____

I **do/do not** (*please delete*) have snow clearing equipment that I could bring with me.