

November 2023

To Parents/Carers/Staff,

Severe Weather

Severe Snow/Ice Plan for Parents and Families

"Schools should, wherever possible, stay open in severe weather. They play a key role in their communities and by staying open help both their pupils and parents." – **Department for Education**

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread and prolonged disruption. Schools are often affected, and it can be difficult to maintain an education service.

As a fundamental principle every effort must be made to keep schools open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend. However, schools may close due to 'unavoidable' circumstances. Those circumstances being that it is no longer safe for staff or pupils to be onsite.

We recognise that it is important that our school remains open so parents are able to work, and pupils can continue to learn. Five Acre Wood will make every effort to prepare for severe snow/ice this winter by gritting pathways, clearing access points and where possible the car park.

How will we let you me know if the school is closed?

If we do experience severe snow/ice resulting in hazardous conditions, our Principal may have to take the decision to close the school. Once this decision has been made, we will notify parents via the Kent Closures website.

To determine whether Five Acre Wood is open or closed please visit www.kentclosures.co.uk. Search for the school in the search box. The Kent Closures website can also be used to find out if other services in Kent are open or closed, such as nurseries, children's centres and libraries. We recommend parents sign up for SMS/Email alerts on the Kent Closures website. This service will send an SMS or email alert to let parents know if Five Acre Wood is closed. Parents/Carers who use Arbor will receive a notification if the school is closed and this information will be updated on the school website and Facebook page. Parents/Carers can also listen to KMFM, BBC Radio Kent or Heart FM for school closure updates.

What can you do to help?

- Please visit www.kent.gov.uk/winter for more information about gritting routes and travel issues around Kent so you can plan your journey.
- Please can you provide a packed lunch from home in case school meals are not able to be prepared.

- Do not forget suitable warm clothing – gloves, hats, scarves, wellies etc. or even a change of clothing.
- If you are a working parent or feel you may have a problem with a sudden earlier pick up, please could you put a back-up plan in place with another family member or parent and inform the school. This will allow staff to leave earlier for their safety if weather dictates.

Five Acre Wood covers a very large catchment area and weather conditions can vary within the area. In severe weather the school site becomes very hazardous and despite salting, these conditions can persist for several days. We are also aware that you may experience severe conditions when the school does not. It is very helpful therefore if you can phone in to let us know if your child is not coming to school due to local conditions.

Many thanks for your support in helping Five Acre Wood remain open during periods of severe weather.

Kind regards

The Senior Leadership Team