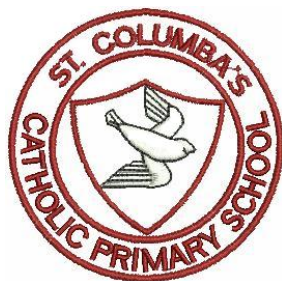


ST. COLUMBA'S COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Winter Hazard/ Gritting Policy Statement

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 It is St. Columba's Catholic Primary School policy to attempt to maintain safe pathway and yard surfaces at all times, as far as the resources available for undertaking this work permit. This document, which will be reviewed annually, sets out the School's policies and objectives, together with generic risk assessments, stating how they will be implemented and put into practice.

1.2 The objective of St. Columba's Catholic Primary School is to initiate and manage procedures for dealing with weather emergencies, enabling as far as reasonably possible, the safe movement of adults and children on the hard surfaces across our school.

1.3 At times of predicted low temperatures the school aims to provide a winter maintenance plan enabling as far as is reasonably possible the safe movement of people on all pathways, play areas and yards across our school

1.4 The school has agreed that its Premises Officer will do a daily yard and pathway inspection throughout the winter months, and in times of hazard. This will commence on the second week in November and finish the last week of March.

1.5 Pre-salting and snow clearance of the pedestrian routes will be carried out based on information received from the weather forecasting service and as a result of daily site inspection outcomes. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to apply more grit after the formation of icy patches due to unforeseen circumstances such as a further drop in temperatures.

1.6 For precautionary gritting, response and treatment times are 1 hour before adults and children enter the premises, at 8.30am then as necessary throughout the day.

1.7 When snow falls and accumulates on outdoor surfaces, shovels and other appropriate tools will be used to remove snow and grit will be spread to help melt the snow and to prevent ice forming on the highway network throughout the external pedestrian and play areas.

1.8 Winter Hazards are cross-referenced and noted in area risk assessments which are updated every year.

"In particular, the leadership of the school is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, that safe passage along a pathway or yard area is not endangered by snow or ice".

1.9 The duty, however, is not simply to clear snow and ice. The amendment puts a duty on the school to ensure "safe passage is not endangered by snow and ice" and, therefore, preventative, rather than reactive, action falls within this duty.

2.3 The duty is not absolute, however, in that the actions shall be considered as "reasonably practicable". The amendment provides the pedestrian user with a facility to claim where it can be shown that an accident was caused by ice or snow on the pathway or play area. The school would have to show that it acted reasonably practicably in not gritting more than it did or in the case where there was no gritting at all, that it was not reasonably practicable or necessary to grit.

2.4 This is not an absolute duty, given the qualification of "reasonable practical". Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Maintenance Service and obvious difficulties in maintaining high levels of premises staffing and specialist equipment, it is not practically possible either to:

- Provide the service on all parts of the exterior of the school to the same level.
- Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice or snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the pathways or yards.
- Account for variance in suitable footwear and awareness of the general public.

1.10 Pathways will, therefore, be cleared of snow and icy areas will be gritted in descending order of priority until such time as all the Primary pathways and pedestrian entrances are cleared. Then, if other areas are physically blocked or particularly hazardous and there is a need for access, further action will be taken.

1.11 The school has agreed that following the arrival of adults and children to the school between 8.30am and 9.10am, further areas will be individually risk assessed and if necessary kept clear of adults and children.

1.12 Grit is readily available to the premises officer if gritting needs to be undertaken through an IDO order.

1.13 St. Columba's is not usually affected by long periods of extreme weather conditions and consequently resources are provided to deal with conditions that might reasonably be expected. In the event of prolonged periods of severe weather the procedures need to be reviewed by the Leadership Team and Premises Officer. Where there are continuous potential hazards in severe weather, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will take further action and seek advice for the Local Authority.

Appendix A: Preparation for weekend and holiday periods.

The Premises Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the school premises are prepared for potentially damaging cold weather. This will cover the procedures below, which are not exhaustive.

Autumn and Spring terms:

Weekends:

Fridays: All toilets should be clear of waste. Those that need flushing at lock up should be flushed to prevent hygiene issues related to freezing. All blow heaters should be in on the on position at lock up. Five day weather forecasts will be

provided for the Premises Officer by the office. Plans for gritting and other cold weather related safety and maintenance actions can be formulated for the weekend and following week can be based on this.

Holidays:

All toilets should be clear of waste. Those that need flushing at lock up should be flushed to prevent hygiene issues related to freezing. All blow heaters should be in on the on position at lock up. Long range weather forecasts will be provided for the Premises Officer by the office. Plans for gritting and other cold weather related safety and maintenance actions can be formulated for holiday periods. Where applicable, valves in vulnerable places should be closed for the holiday period.

Summer term:

Gritting equipment should be assessed for suitability for the upcoming winter and grit levels should be replenished in advance of cold weather.

Reviewed:

Signed:..... Headteacher

Signed:..... Chair of Governors