



George Abbot School

Severe Weather: Information and Guidance for Parents

(This information and guidance is taken from the school's 'Severe Weather Policy and Guidance' which can be obtained from Elmslie Office on request or on the School Website)

Context

Really bad weather is disruptive and can cause anxiety and stress. Understandably, many parents ring the School if snow starts falling heavily during the day. It can be frustrating trying to get through when all our outside lines are engaged by other parents calling for the same reason.

Decisions about closing the School or sending students home early are always difficult to make. We need to gather reliable information before making a judgement. We check weather reports, get advice from the bus companies and try to assess what is happening elsewhere in the area. Some buses may not be available. Operators have to decide whether running vehicles on particular routes in snow and ice is too high a risk. Drivers are rarely available at times other than scheduled School runs. That is why schools often take their lead from the bus companies when deciding what to do.

When weather is extreme and the school is open, the school faces a number of challenges.

- Communication of information to staff, students and parents.
- Staff and students arriving at school and on time; ensuring all classes are supervised.
- Health and safety on the school site; snow and ice can be hazardous and movement between buildings brings a significant amount of water into the school which can result in slips.
- Supervision of students at break and lunch time when being outside is too cold or unsafe.

As a result, the timings of the school day may need to change, and it may not be possible to accommodate all students on site. Clearly we are unable to predetermine arrangements for every eventuality, however on occasions when weather is so severe that getting to and from School become hazardous, or it is not possible to run the normal school routines, the following guidance will apply.

Communication

In the event of full or partial closures, details will be communicated where possible via:

- The school website www.georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk by 7.00am and updated throughout the day.
- School Comms message
- County Council – <http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-closures>
- Twitter – https://twitter.com/gabbot_news

In addition the following will be notified for their broadcasts

- Eagle Radio - <http://www.964eagle.co.uk/>

In addition staff will be notified via

- School email
- SMS Text to mobile phones

If the School is to be closed due to adverse weather overnight:

Two possible scenarios might occur:

- 1) The School will be closed. The decision to close the school will be taken if opening the School would be deemed unsafe for staff and students. Every effort will be made to ensure the school opens again as soon as possible.
- 2) The School will be partially open:

- Either with lessons starting later in the morning e.g. 9.40am to ensure all staff and students can travel to work safely.
- Or open for identified year groups. This could be due to the fact that a certain number of staff are unable to make the journey into School and therefore decisions will be made to determine which students should come in. Obviously students involved with examination courses are likely to be given priority.

Details of full / partial closures will be communicated (as outlined above) by 7.00am

If the school is open – Guidelines:

These guidelines have been drawn up to establish a reasonable balance between protecting students in terms of health and safety, and at the same time acknowledging the fact that the occurrence of snow is relatively rare and many students will want to be outside in the fresh air / snow at break and lunch time if possible.

Experience has shown that it is not possible to supervise safely nearly 2000 students of a wide age range, on a large site, and allow them to throw snowballs. However, although the school actively discourages the throwing of snowballs, in reality it is not possible to guarantee this will never happen and **parents should instruct their son / daughter to remain inside the building if there is any concern about them going out in the snow.**

Where the school is open and there is snow / ice on the playgrounds the following guidelines apply.

- Students will be allowed to wear mufti when there is snow on the ground or in extremely cold weather BUT only when permission is expressly given.
- Students must remain on the main footpaths between buildings when moving to lessons. The field is out of bounds.
- At break / lunchtime:
 - The field is out of bounds
 - If there is **ice** on the playgrounds, the wet break bell will ring and students **MUST** go to their indoor wet weather venues.
 - If there is a light covering of snow, students may go outside to the playground but **may not** throw snowballs
 - Students may remain in the building in designated venues (Gallery, USIC, canteen, hall or supervised clubs) unless it is wet break, when wet weather venues apply.

Students will also be made aware that bringing snow into the building on shoes / clothing creates an additional health and safety risk and that everyone should take additional care in the corridors and on the stairs.

Please note:

- The lunch time **may** be shortened to facilitate indoor supervision (see below) and consequently the school day **may** finish at 3.00pm **or earlier in the event of worsening weather.**
- In the event of the school needing to close early in unforeseen circumstances (flood, no power, water etc.) a message will be put on the school website and sent by School Comms and students allowed to leave the site. We will ask students to make contact with a responsible adult to alert them to the fact they are leaving school, but will not formally check that this has been done.
- Supervision will be provided for students unable to go home at the earlier time in Elmslie Conference Room (ECR).
- Students waiting for buses should wait either in the Gallery (Subway buses) or Raynham Canteen (Raynham buses).

If for any reason you are unhappy with this arrangement, please contact your son / daughter's Head of Year in writing, and we will ensure they do not leave the premises early without your express consent.

Example of a modified timetable for 'snow' days

Example 1

On arrival	Students go to wet weather (snow) venues; teaching staff p1 join year group
8.30 – 8.35 Notices	At 8.30 am notices for the day will be given out by lead member of SLT . Depending on difficulties being experienced, students will be dismissed gradually at 8.35 am with subject teachers to period 1. Cover arranged for absent staff.
8.35 – 8.55	Registration / Assembly
8.55 – 1.30	Normal timetable
1.30 – 2.00	Lunch
2.00 – 3.00	Period 5

Example 2

On arrival	Students go to wet weather (snow) venues; teaching staff p1 join year group
8.30	Allows time to check staff that have got in; identify where there are problems. Staff report to venue of year group they teach p1
9.00-9.30	Registration (See information below)
9.30-10.20	Period 1 (Arrangements made for those students still without staff)
10.20-11.10	Period 2 (No movement bell)
11.10-11.25	Break (Shortened)
11.25-12.15	Period 3 (No movement bell)
12.15-1.05	Period 4 (No movement bell)
1.05-1.35	Lunch (Shortened)
1.35-2.35	Period 5
2.40	End of school

Attendance

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the School to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

External Examinations

With the new examination schedule, it is highly unlikely that any external examinations will be affected by severe weather. However, in any event where examinations might be disrupted, the school will post appropriate information on the school website.

Site Safety

In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, students and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Students will also be reminded of this in assembly and asked to walk only on cleared pathways.

Distance Learning

In the event of school (early) closures, students are able to support their learning at home by completing homework / coursework or accessing distance learning sites (My Maths; Sam Learning; GCSE Podcasts; departmental websites etc.). Students should check Show My Homework. Check their school email as class teachers may email them work to complete.

After School clubs, activities and events

Depending on the weather, it may be possible for some after school / evening activities to take place. Clarification will be made via School Comms, the school website, and information given to students.

How Parents can help

- Check the School website, School Comms email and listen to Eagle Radio 96.4.
- Plan ahead - advise your child what to do in a bad weather emergency.

- Only call the School if you really have to – calls in prevent calls out!
- Encourage your child / children to carry out the identified school work at home / check school email/check Show My Homework for work set.

Transport Companies Contact Numbers:

Note: This list is not exhaustive and parents should make sure they ring the appropriate company. George Abbot School bears no responsibility for the accuracy of this information

Company		Route
Abellio	0207 788 8550	
Arriva	0344 800 4411	
Buses Excetera	0844 414 5410	
Edward Thomas & Son	020 8397 4276	E718, E720
Greenshades	01483 418012	
Newtons	01483 233402	E715, E716
Bicknell Coaches	01483 300030	E719
The Green Bus Company	0845 234 2222	PT6, PT7