UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

LEVELLING THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ARENA

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Mission Statement

The Levels School exists to provide a nurturing environment in which students with specific learning difficulties and co-occurring diagnoses can develop their self-esteem and aspire to be independent young adults who value the rights, responsibilities and rules that exist to promote and support their future welfare. Our approach toward establishing this ideology is predicated on trauma-informed practice and an obligation to develop the social skills required to build their future aspirational communities. We exist to help them find their level.

This policy covers all premises known as The Levels School.

Date of policy	December 2025
Next review date	December 2026
Frequency of policy review (annually, every two years)	Annually
Policy owner	Caroline Cook – Head teacher
Published policy	Yes ☐ No ☒
List of connected policies	Health and Safety, Risk management policy, Management of staff absence policy, Supervision policy, Relational Policy, Staff discipline policy
Approved / Date	Approved by Governors

Contents

Mission Statement 1
Policy Aims and Objectives 3
Potential Closure 3
Management Plan and Procedures 3
Responsibilities 4
Board of governors 4
Head teacher 4
Proprietors 4
All staff 5
Clearance Procedures 5
In the event of heavy snow (and heavy rainfall and potential flooding) before the School day starts 6
In the event of heavy snowfall/heavy rainfall and flooding during the school day 7
Wet break time and Lunchtime provision 7
Internal Routes 8
Appendix A - Etonhurst Site Map showing order of Priority for Application of Salt Grit/Other Materials 9
Appendix C - preventative measures for extreme weather conditions 10
Frost damage 10
Flooding 10
Structural damage 10

Policy Aims and Objectives

Under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, schools are expected to manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks relating to slips, trips and falls from ice and snow within the boundaries of the school premises. The same regulations also require that internal traffic routes are managed during adverse weather conditions.

The Levels School endeavour to keep our school open and operating as normal. In the event of severe adverse weather, it may be necessary to make a decision to close the school for the safety of the children and staff.

In the event of adverse weather, in particular snow and ice, The Levels School's policy aims to maintain safe access, egress and routes across the Etonhurst site and into Ashcott House site as far as reasonably practicable, within the resources available.

Flooding of traffic routes that students and staff are required to navigate are also considered to fall within the general remit of this policy.

All reasonable efforts are made to ensure The Levels School remains open, and partial closure will always be considered before the decision is made to completely close The Levels School.

The Levels School has a large catchment area with students funded by 6 different local authorities across the Southwest. The Transport team will communicate clearly where a route may be compromised even if the school remains open.

Potential Closure

The decision to close is made by the Head teacher in consultation with the Proprietors considering the following:

Health and Safety – does remaining open constitute a significant risk to students and/or staff when the following is considered:

- Conditions on site being dangerous.
- Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become, too hazardous to travel.

Availability of staff – has the severe weather meant that a significant number of staff have been unable to attend, making the site unsafe in terms of supervision and therefore, impossible to open?

Our first priority will always be to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, parents and families. Where practical, we will consider opening later in order to enable staff and children to have additional time to travel to school safely. We will clear paths within school to make access as safe as possible and will keep supplies of grit to support this.

Management Plan and Procedures

A management plan has been devised together with generic risk assessments to describe how the procedures will be implemented and put into practice in order to meet the aims

and objectives of this policy. Due to the rural nature of the Etonhurst and Ashcott House sites, it is recognised that it is impossible to immediately clear snow and ice from all the areas/pathways leading up to, through car park and throughout entire site. The procedures do however, require those responsible to exercise careful judgement in prioritising key access, egress and routes throughout the site. Those responsible will outline the responsibilities of all users to exercise their own initiative in ensuring their own and others safety during times of adverse weather, particularly snow and ice once on the Etonhurst and Ashcott House site.

Responsibilities

Board of governors

Responsibility for this policy has been delegated to the Head Teacher in consultation with the Proprietors. The effectiveness of these procedures in minimising the risks of adverse weather, particularly from snow and ice will be judged through, and in conjunction with, the Risk Management procedures. Flooding of traffic routes that students and staff are required to navigate are also considered to fall within the general remit of this policy.

Head teacher

To formally review the policy on an annual basis.

In consultation with the Proprietors ensure means of access, egress and routes across the Etonhurst and Ashcott House sites are safe for staff, students and visitors and that adequate arrangements are made to ensure that the risks from adverse weather, in particular snow and ice, are minimised. In circumstances when safe access, egress and safe routes cannot be achieved, and the decision is made to close or partially close The Levels School, this will be communicated to all relevant parties.

Proactively monitor the weather forecast and initiate preventative measures to manage risks from snow, ice and potential flooding of traffic routes into school for students and staff.

In consultation with the Proprietors, consider how adverse weather, in particular snow, ice and potential flooding of traffic routes may affect the operation of the school e.g. transport difficulties in getting to The Levels School and the availability of staff and other services.

Advise parents and students of the risks during adverse weather, in particular ice and snow and the importance of suitable footwear.

Proprietors

In consultation with the Head teacher, monitor the effectiveness of the policy and management plan and report any concerns to the Board of Governors through the Health and Safety working group.

To follow the Site map detailing order of priority for clearing of snow and ice and communicate to the grounds staff.

Proactively monitor the weather forecast and initiate preventative measures to manage risks from snow and ice.

Proactively monitor current conditions and react to changing priorities, e.g. communicating temporary closure of play areas/pathways, amending/ increasing working hours of the grounds staff to deal with increased levels of snow and ice.

Ensure sufficient supply of suitable equipment and salt grit/other materials are available in order to meet demand.

Monitor the condition of internal floors, replace wet matting / use additional matting as necessary and consider whether additional mopping is required, particularly on or near steps and stairs.

To manage the grounds staff to ensure:

- The immediate clearance of snow and ice from designated areas, in line with the procedures and shown on the site map.
- Equipment provided to clear snow and ice is maintained in a satisfactory condition.
- Temporary closure of designated areas until cleared. Such areas should be clearly marked, e.g. signage, tape etc.

All staff

Be aware that when areas have had salt grit/other materials applied, it is not a guarantee that the paths are completely safe or slip-proof; please travel with caution when moving around site.

Be aware of the risk assessment in place for adverse weather, in particular snow and ice and take responsibility for following the designated routes when such conditions exist.

Safeguard their own, colleagues' and students' health and safety.

Ensure appropriate footwear is worn to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.

Report any internal wet areas/external icy patches to the Head Teacher who will inform the grounds staff to enable them to position wet floor signs/mop up any excess water/re-apply salt grit/other materials.

Communicate to students the need to wear appropriate footwear in snow and ice and to exercise caution when moving around site.

Clearance Procedures

During severe weather, the grounds staff will suspend their other duties and priority will be given to clearing snow and ice.

The grounds staff will be provided with suitable equipment and Personal Protective Equipment.

In order of priority shown on the site map, paths will be treated with salt grit/other materials to maintain safe access, egress and routes immediately onto the site as far as is practicably possible.

Any particularly dangerous areas which require extra care will be identified and will be checked/treated more frequently e.g. steps, slopes, gullies which may be hidden etc.

Where snow has fallen, a path 1 metre wide will be cleared, in order of priority shown on the site map. Paths will be treated with salt grit/other materials to maintain a clear pathway especially where temperatures remain below freezing.

Routes will be regularly checked throughout the day by the Grounds staff to ensure further freezing or snow coverage has not occurred. Additional care should be taken when clearing sloping pathways and steps, it may be necessary for safety reasons to consider the temporary closure of some non-essential areas of the site (e.g. steep pathways, play areas, etc.) to avoid risks to staff, students or visitors.

An assessment of the situation will be made in consultation with the Head teacher by the Estate Manager.

To gain the most economical and environmental solution, the minimum amount of salt grit should be used. As a guide a good handful is sufficient to treat 1m².

There is no advantage in applying grit salt/other materials to deep snow; this should be cleared from the path first.

When severe weather is forecast site staff will spread salt grit/other materials the night before as well as on arrival prior to 07.45. The routes will be treated in order of priority with the staff entrance from rear car park, down steps adjacent to the tennis court, with entry into school over the footbridge being treated by 07.45 or earlier by arrangement with the Proprietors, Head Teacher and Estate Manager. This is indicated on the diagram in Appendix A with a red arrow.

Access into Ashcott House will be via the path along the rear of the science outbuildings (OB1 and OB2) and along the path to the gate between the two properties. The driveway and route to Ashcott Huse front door will be cleared and gritted.

In extreme conditions the Proprietors will investigate the snow clearing services provided by the local authority.

The gritting of roads and pavements outside the site are dealt with separately by the Somerset Highways Department. It is worth noting that this excludes Kings Lane as this is an unadopted highway. The Proprietors will advise as to the safety of Kings Lane.

In the event of heavy snow (and heavy rainfall and potential flooding) before the School day starts

Parents - When school closure is a possibility parents should find out whether the school is open by:

- Checking their email. Am ‘allparent’ email can be sent from the office address
- Checking the school website – www.thelevelsschool.com where we will post an update
- Checking The Levels School Facebook page where we will post an update
- Listening to the local radio stations. We will inform BBC Radio Somerset and Heart FM - local stations which cover the areas where our students are traveling from. We will

ensure we are aware of other local stations that cover the areas that other students may travel in from and inform these as appropriate.

Parents will be advised to keep checking these methods of communication, as we will provide regular updates. If it is possible to delay the start time to allow time to make the site safe or staff to get into work, then we will update through the methods listed above.

If it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, parents should ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late. The Levels School fully appreciates that in adverse weather conditions children may arrive later than usual.

If parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances - The School recognises that there may be cases where families are "cut off" due to particular difficulties in the area in which they live. In such cases parents should advise the Head Teacher of their particular circumstances so they can justify to the Local Authority why the absence should be authorised.

In the event of heavy snowfall/heavy rainfall and flooding during the school day

If there is heavy snowfall/ rainfall and risk of flooding during the school day, the Head Teacher in consultation with the Proprietors will decide whether it is necessary to close the school or in the case of those that live in an affected area, transport those on school transport home earlier and contact parents that have other means of transport to collect their child earlier.

The Office will contact parents and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible. An email will also be sent out and the website and social media pages updated accordingly when appropriate.

The Staff who live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity. A skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected.

If a parent rings requesting, they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher.

Wet break time and Lunchtime provision

The Head teacher in consultation with the Estates Manager will decide which areas of the school are safe for outside breaks.

If the site, or areas of the site, are deemed unsafe and it is advised students don't have breaks outside, then student breaks will be supervised in areas inside the school. The duty rota for supervision will in place but staff members relocated. Should any staff member not be in school then their duty will be covered in the usual way.

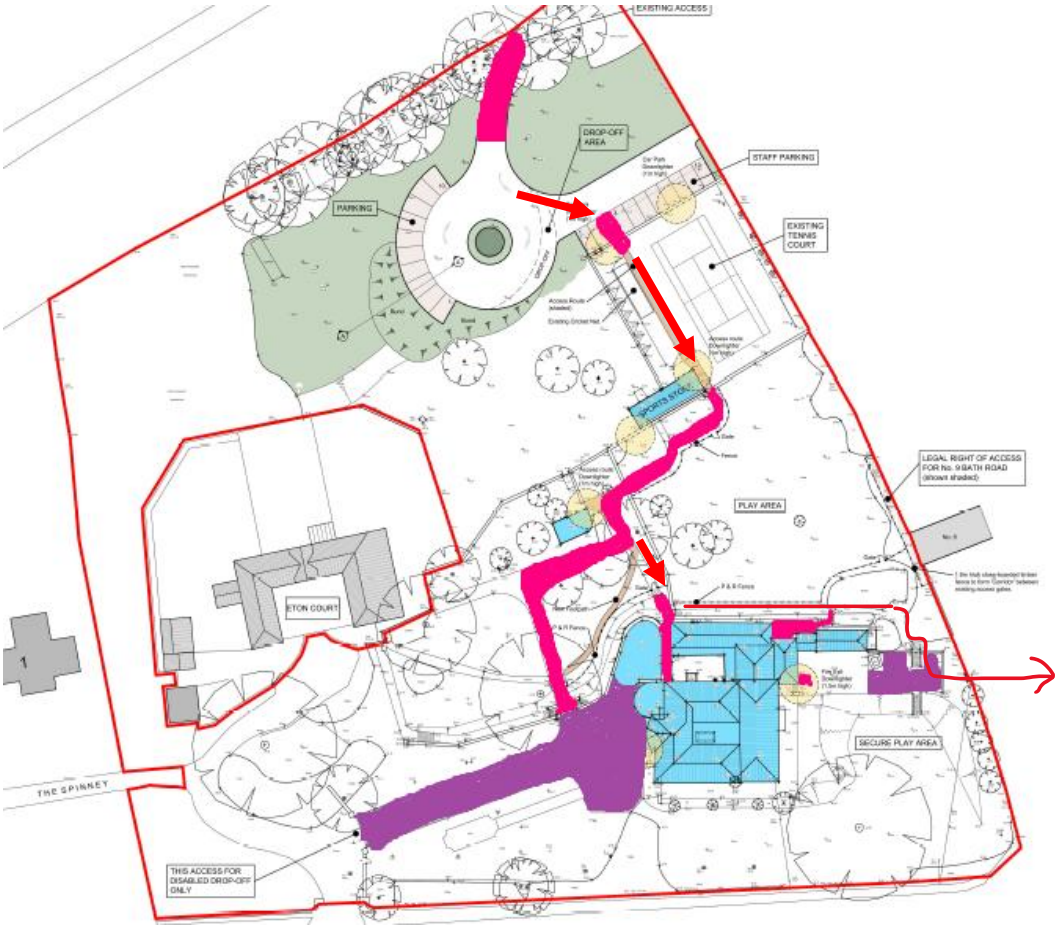
Internal Routes

During adverse weather, the risks of slipping, tripping or falling on internal traffic routes is increased due to flooring becoming wet. This is made worse by snow coming in on footwear.

The Estates Manager and support staff will carefully monitor the condition of internal floors, replace wet matting / use additional matting as necessary and consider whether additional mopping is required, particularly on or near steps and stairs.

Appendix A - Etonhurst Site Map showing order of Priority for Application of Salt Grit/Other Materials

The site will be cleared/gritted in the following order of priority:



Access route to Ashcott House site →

Priority 1

Priority 2

→ Denotes priority access for staff initially from 07.45 and then students from 08.15

Appendix C - preventative measures for extreme weather conditions

Frost damage

- Check there is sufficient fuel to keep the heating system running throughout the closure period.
- Listen to the weather forecast.
- Visit Etonhurst and Ashcott House buildings frequently.
- Do not switch the boiler controls to "Off"
- If there are prolonged sub-zero temperatures run heating systems at Etonhurst and Ashcott House as for normal occupancy, for a minimum of 4 hours per day.
- Do not switch the electricity off at the mains and distribution boards.
- Keep all windows and doors closed.
- Open any trap doors to roof spaces to enhance warm air circulation.
- Identify the locations and know how to operate the following:
  - Mains water and heating valves.
  - Water storage tank.
  - Mains electrical and sub-mains switch boards.
  - Boiler and heating control panels.
  - Frost protection systems.

Flooding

- Stop or reduce the flow of water.
- If electrical lighting or other equipment becomes wet – turn off supply at distribution board.
- Consider temporary repairs.

Structural damage

Visit Etonhurst site and Ashcott House site after any storms. If safe, inspect and assess any structural damage and commission any repair work accordingly. Visually inspect trees on and around the site to look for broken branches which may pose a danger and seek the advice of a tree surgeon as appropriate.