



HIGHFIELDS
SPENCER ACADEMY

Important **Inclement weather**

‘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 all staff or pupils to be on site. We recognize that it is important that our school remains open so parents are able to work and pupils can continue to learn. Highfields Spencer Academy will make every effort to prepare for snow/ ice this winter by gritting pathways and clearing access points.

However, if we do experience severe snow/ ice resulting in hazardous conditions, we may have to take the decision to close the school. Once this decision had been made parents will be contacted immediately via our school communication system Class Dojo. It will also be posted on our Twitter feed and Derbyshire’s school closure website.

This will be updated regularly and will identify times for further updates. Derbyshire schools are not required to notify the local authority in the event of closure. Decisions about closure will be made in consultation with Spencer Academies Trust and Highfields will make sure to consult with local schools also. Any decision about closure will be based on the specific circumstances of our school- Can staff get in safely? Can pupils get in safely?

In the event of SNOW – School Access Plan

The gates to the right and left of school entrance (nursery gate and playground gate will remain closed). All pupils will be asked to enter the building by walking down the pedestrian drive straight to the main school entrance, where staff will greet you.

The pedestrian walkway and staff car park will be gritted, but we urge all parents and pupils to still exercise caution when walking into and from school.

The pedestrian walkway is a much safer route for pedestrians in the snow and ice as the children are kept away from cars slipping on the ice. The main car park gates are always closed during school drop off and pick-up times to reduce the temptation to use the driveway as a shortcut into school.

School gates will be closed from 8.30am until 9.30am then 3.10pm till 4pm during drop off and pick up times.

If these gates are temporarily open to allow staff, large deliveries or Mac’s Club (our on-site Before and After School Club) to enter/ leave please do not give in to temptation to walk through them. This is for your safety. They have to safely drop off and collect pupils from other schools and during the coronavirus epidemic this means that they are having to stagger the times they are leaving or entering school at the moment. Where weather is really bad Mac’s Club will be encouraged to use the car park opposite school and walk across to school.

All pupils are encouraged to walk to school whenever possible. Any parents who need to drop off or pick up using a car are reminded that the school car park is for staff and visitors only not for parents. Thank you

What can you do to help?

- Do not use the car park as a cut through when walking to school if it has been opened temporarily for Mac's Club or staff to enter, use the main pedestrian walkway.
- All other cars travelling to school to use the car park opposite the school site.
- Warm clothing- gloves, hats, scarves, wellies and a change of shoes and clothes.
- Only use the pedestrian walkway for dropping off and picking up, not the side gates (this is to reduce the distance you and your child need to get safely into school).
- 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.

Many thanks for your support in helping Highfields Spencer Academy to remain open during periods of severe snow/ ice.