

The Blue Tangerine Federation

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

POLICIES, GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES



Severe Weather Policy & Procedures

Date Reviewed: December 2024

Date Governing Body Approved: Not Applicable

Review Period: Every two years

Staff Responsibility: Manda Sides

Date for Next Review: December 2026

Changes since last version:

Page	Section	Details of change
3	2. Closure Decisions	2.3 class dojo added 2.4 <i>'or by calling 07919 391934 (weekend support) outlining the issue.'</i> added. 2.5 <i>'It may be necessary to ask all children to bring packed lunches if the kitchen staff are unable to reach school safely. Parents will be notified by Arbor/website/class dojo if this is the case.'</i> Moved from 3.3 to second bullet point.
4	3. Staffing	3.3 Last sentence Lara deleted.
4	4. Preparation for Severe Weather	4.1 Wording changed <i>'and set to 5-10 degrees'</i> added.
5	4. Preparation for Severe Weather	4.4 added
7	Appendix 1	SERTS members updated with contact details
8	Appendix 2	Taxi contact details updated

1. Rationale

Our primary duty is to educate students in a safe environment. Extreme weather conditions may lead to a conflict between our duty to educate and our concern for safety. This document sets out the procedure for such conditions and sets out the actions the schools within the Blue Tangerine Federation need to take in the event of severe weather.

2. Closure Decisions

2.1 Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances. The decision to close a school in severe weather, or when responding to a public emergency, should be taken by the Executive Head/Head of School based on the following:

- ❖ Local conditions;
- ❖ This Guidance;
- ❖ Emergency Evacuation Policy;
- ❖ An Assessment of Risk;
- ❖ Information from the Local Authority.

2.2 When we experience severe adverse weather conditions, it is always very difficult to determine how this will affect travel and site safety, particularly when we have snow and ice. When making a decision to close a school, there are a number of issues that have to be considered:

- Many students are reliant on public taxis, therefore schools need to be sure that the taxis will run and that journeys are safe;
- Some staff live some way from school, some a considerable distance away. Schools therefore have to be confident that there will be sufficient staff able to get in, in order to teach the students as school has a duty to ensure a safe level of supervision;
- The condition of the site – is it safe for students and staff to move around the school? Clearing paths and gritting takes a long time. It is a difficult decision to make and parents will appreciate the dilemma between giving everyone sufficient notice of closure and trying to guess what road and weather conditions will be between 8.00 and 8.30am

2.3 If at all possible a decision will be taken by 9.00pm the night before or at the very latest by 7.30am on the day. It is possible that a decision will be taken to open the school but with a delayed starting time. Our decision will be posted on the school's website and on the school's Facebook page and will be updated regularly. In addition, the office will send out a message via Arbor and/or class dojo.

2.4 We will inform local radio stations – **BBC Three Counties 103.8FM, 630MW/1161MW; Heart Four Counties 96.6FM, 101.7FM; 103FM or Bob FM 106.7FM and 106.9FM or Radio Verulam 92.6FM.** We will also inform the local authority of closure by email to SchoolsCNS@hertfordshire.gov.uk or by calling 07919 391934 (weekend support) outlining the issue.

No closure message on our website means that we intend to open and all students will be expected to attend.

2.5 During the school day

- Once a decision has been made to open the school, we will endeavour to remain open for the duration of the school day. If the weather becomes severe during the day, then parents should contact the school if they feel that they would like to collect their child early for safety reasons (i.e. travelling or walking long distances or collecting other children from other local schools).
- It may be necessary to ask all children to bring packed lunches if the kitchen staff are unable to reach school safely. Parents will be notified by Arbor/website/class dojo if this is the case.
- If the school decides to send pupils home early, then the school has a duty to notify all parents to ensure that there is an adult at home to receive their child. No child will be sent home early on transport if this has not been substantiated.
- The schools will endeavour to remain open until 2.30 pm (Collett) 3pm (St Luke's). If parents anticipate being delayed due to adverse weather conditions, please leave in good time to collect your child. If they are delayed they should contact the school to give an estimated time of arrival.
- Any Afterschool Clubs will run if at all possible. Parents of children who are due to attend on that day will all be contacted to let them know if there are any different arrangements.
- In such circumstances, parents must consider their own safety, traffic congestion and the safety of others.

3. Staffing

- 3.1 Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the Police recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys, this is considered to include travel to work and school.
- 3.2 Staff will always make every reasonable effort to undertake the journey to school. It is appreciated that the journey may take longer than normal and therefore some staff may not be able to arrive before the normal start of the school day.
- 3.3 Where it is deemed too unsafe or difficult for staff to attend their workplace, other options should be considered. For example, attending another site or working from home. The school system is now cloud based therefore can be accessed by the staff logins offsite.
- 3.4 Staff **must** always make contact with the Head of School or their line manager to discuss their situation and consider options. For example, working from home, coming in later or working from another site.

4. Preparation for Severe Weather

- 4.1 In the event of severe weather the premises manager/caretaker will make sure that the heating is left on during 'out of hours' periods and set to 5-10 degrees for frost protection purposes.
- 4.2 The Head of School will brief staff in advance to ensure they know what is expected of them.

- 4.3 The Head of School will frequently brief parents, children etc. in advance to ensure they understand where they can get up to date information from, e.g. Arbor, class dojo, school website or local radio stations.
- 4.4 Ensure regular suppliers/contractors are informed of procedures and confirm arrangements are in place for essential services/deliveries.
- 4.5 Where schools are open, risk assessments must be undertaken by the Premises Manager/Caretaker and reported to the Head of Operations and Head of School to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and all site users. Inspections of paths and walkways should be carried out regularly and documented. This should include local arrangements for clearing and salting when ice or snow appears, as well as any failures to the surfaces.

If the school is insured with HCC, the Council's insurance section will deal with any liability issues that arise. Any claim that is made to the school should be passed to the insurance section immediately – email schoolsbmt@hertfordshire.gov.uk . The team will then process the claim and deal directly with the claimant, or their appointed representatives.

- 4.6 Where gales or high wind warnings have been issued, the site should be checked for dead or damaged branches/trees and other potential hazards to people or property.
- 4.7 Where it is not possible for some staff and/or children to return home, the Head of School will ensure there are plans in place to provide warmth and hot refreshments.
- 4.8 In extreme circumstances HCC may request that schools or other establishments be used as rest centres for members of the public.

5. Responding to Severe Weather

- 5.1 The Head of School will keep a regular check on the forecast for severe weather conditions. The Head of School should ensure there is an up to date list of home contact/mobile phone details provided by Pupil Admin for parent contact details, and HR Admin for staff contact details.
- 5.2 Should a school need to close due to severe weather the office should email SchoolsCNS@hertfordshire.gov.uk to make the Local Authority aware.
- 5.3 In Head of School/Office Staff will use all means possible to inform parents and staff that the school will be closed:
- The website will be updated regularly by the Head of Operations/Executive Head to reflect the current situation;
 - Office staff will update the message on the school answer machine to reflect the school's situation;
 - Office staff will send out a message via Arbor and/or class dojo;
 - The School Emergency Response Team (SERT) will have contact numbers for staff and parents and others to hand and will use a cascade system where possible;
 - Where possible a message will be posted on the main entrance or gate and in the case of schools, ensure someone is there to meet any children/parents etc. who may turn up.

- 5.4 The Head of School/Office will keep in close contact with the HCC transport team on 0300 123043 / 01992 556459 to keep them updated.
- 5.5 School will keep a copy of these procedures with their copy of the Schools Emergency Evacuation Plan and publish it on the school website.

6. Re-opening of Schools Following Closure

- 6.1 If the school has to be closed for several days, the Executive Head and Head of School will make the decision as to when it is safe to re-open the school, liaising with the Local Authority if necessary.
- 6.2 When the severe weather has passed, establishments should check their premises before announcing that it will re-open. The Premises Manger, Caretaker and/or Head of School should inspect the premises for signs of damage, e.g. heating failure, flooding, burst pipes or damaged trees.
- 6.3 School sites that have experienced damage serious enough to warrant declaring a Critical Incident should follow the guidance in the School Emergency Evacuation Plan and use the relevant contact numbers below to report it:

Monday – Friday	08.30 – 17.30	01438 737261
Saturday	09.00 – 16.00	01438 737261

- 6.4 The Head of School should use the schools Arbor system for advising staff of the situation and send an updated message to the Local Authority via SchoolsCNS@hertfordshire.gov.uk .

7. Review

The Severe Weather Policy should be reviewed by the Head of Operations/Heads of School every two years and/or after any severe weather incidents, to ensure that procedures are appropriately implemented and are effective at safeguarding pupils, parents and staff against severe weather.

Appendix 1

Key Staff Details

School Emergency Response Team (SERT)

The School Emergency Response Team (SERT) has responsibility for activating and implementing the School Emergency Plan. The SERT team should record all decisions and actions and be available for briefings sessions, handovers and emergency de-briefs.

All members of the SERT must:

- have a copy of the School Emergency Plan at home and at School
- be aware of their role and responsibilities, and that of others
- have an on call rota for SERT members

Current list of SERT Members

Name	Role	Contact Number(s)
Stephen Houlton-Allen	Executive Headteacher	07XXX XXXXXX
Jennie Witter	Head of School (Collett)	07XXX XXXXXX
Nicola	Deputy Head (Collett)	07XXX XXXXXX
Jamie Caple	Head of School (St Luke's)	07XXX XXXXXX
Max Guiney	Deputy Head (St Luke's)	07XXX XXXXXX
Manda Sides	Head of Operations	07XXX XXXXXX
Billy Soden	Caretaker (Collett)	07XXX XXXXXX
Trevor Hall	Premises Manager (St Luke's)	07XXX XXXXXX
Philip MacBeth-Seath	Safeguarding Lead	07XXX XXXXXX
Donna Abel	HR Officer	07XXX XXXXXX
Rachael Lampey	Bursar	07XXX XXXXXX

Appendix 2 - Transport Contact Information

Name	Role	Contact Number(s)
HCC Transport Team	Transport	0300 123043
Reachers	Taxi (Collett & St Luke's)	01923 711211 / 0208 4201716
Ace Cars	Taxi (Collett)	01442 874700
Rainbow Travel	Taxi (Collett & St Luke's)	01923 555000
Barbar	Taxi (Collett)	07414 767020
Sapphire	Taxi (Collett)	01442 506111
Contract Taxis	Taxi (Collett & St Luke's)	07365 432159 / 01442 247247
Lucketts of Watford	Taxi (St Luke's)	01923 223456/228328
Kings Cars	Taxi (St Luke's)	01923 262266/ 07722 000247
Roman Cars	Taxi (St Luke's)	07411 212015
Harrow	Taxi (St Luke's)	0208 4241443
Corker Cars	Taxi (St Luke's)	01727 844844

APPENDIX 3 – Radio Stations

Heart Four Counties

huw.james@heart.co.uk

east.news@global.com

Telephone: 01908 591629

Covers: The whole of Hertfordshire

Heart 96.6 Hertfordshire

daniel.fox@communicorpuk.com

john.darin@communicorpuk.com

zoe.piner@communicorpuk.com

Telephone: 01923 205477 (dedicated snowline)

Covers: Watford, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Rickmansworth, Berkhamstead, Redbourn, Borehamwood, Kings Langley & Radlett

BBC Three Counties Radio 103.8fm (most of Herts), 92.1fm(Watford), 90.4fm(East Herts) and 630MW/1161MW

3crsnowline@bbc.co.uk

Telephone: 01582 636963 (news desk, open 4am to 8pm)

Covers: The whole of Hertfordshire

BOB FM Hertfordshire (106.7 and 106.9 & DAB Digital Radio

news@bobfm.co.uk

brettharley@me.com

Telephone: 01438 422106 (studio – can leave message 24 hours a day)

Covers: Stevenage, Letchworth, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Hitchin, Ware, Hertford.

Greatest Hits Radio, Bucks Beds & Herts (96.2fm)

bucksnews@bauermedia.co.uk

Telephone: 01296 399396 (office – better number to call if necessary) or 01296 393396 (studio)

Covers: Tring and Berkhamstead

Radio Verulam 92.6

gmsa@radioverulam.com badweather@radioverulam.com

Telephone: 01727 839926

Cover: St Albans District, Harpenden, London Colney, Colney Heath Radlett and Shenley