Nether Green Junior School

Winter Weather Safety & Gritting Policy

Approved by:	Chair of Governors, Premises Governor and Headteacher
Last reviewed on:	Autumn Term 2026
Next review due by:	Autumn Term 2027

RATIONALE

This policy sets out how the school manages snow and ice so that the site can stay open safely for staff, pupils, parents, carers and visitors during periods of winter weather. In line with DfE guidance on emergency planning, the school will remain open wherever it is safe to do so. If a closure is needed, it will be temporary and the school will reopen as soon as possible.

Given that the school is situated on a slope, extra care must be taken to ensure that all access points and walkways are as safe as possible. The first priority is to maintain safe access and exit routes to and from the school site for all users.

OPENING AND CLOSURE DECISIONS

The decision on whether the school opens in severe weather is made by the Headteacher. The Headteacher does not need to be on site to make this decision. The Building Officer will report on the condition of the site and the gritted routes, and the Headteacher will also take into account the weather forecast and any Met Office warnings, whether enough staff can travel safely to school to supervise pupils, and the condition of the roads and footpaths around the school. If the Headteacher cannot be contacted, the decision will be made by the Deputy Headteacher.

Gritting of the Red Route begins before 7am so that the site is ready to open. A decision on opening will be made by 7am. If the school is closed, a message will be sent to parents, carers and staff through the school's messaging system and posted on the school website as early as possible. Clubs and lettings will also be informed.

Where pupils travel to school on council-arranged transport, parents and carers should let the school office know if the transport is not running.

If the school is closed, pupils can continue with homework tasks that have already been set. We hope that children who are able to will also enjoy the snow safely.

Closing during the school day:

If the weather worsens during the day, the Headteacher may decide to close the school early. If this happens:

- Parents and carers will be contacted through the school's messaging system and asked to collect their child.
- Pupils will only be released to a parent, carer or another adult authorised by them.
- Pupils who normally walk home on their own will only leave early if their parent or carer has confirmed this with the school on the day. Otherwise, they will leave at 3:35pm as usual.
- Pupils will be supervised in school until they are collected.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher and Office Staff:

1. Ensure that the school is fully equipped with appropriate snow-clearing equipment and an adequate supply of rock salt and grit.
2. Oversee continued snow and ice clearance throughout the day if necessary.

3. Develop and maintain the school's gritting plan, prioritising routes and access points, particularly considering the school's sloped terrain.
4. Make the 'Adverse Weather Guidance for Parents and Carers' document available to parents and carers via the school website.
5. Review and update the school's gritting plan every year, or immediately following any changes to the school grounds, including building work.
6. Consider accessibility needs for disabled staff, pupils or visitors during winter weather.

Building Officer:

1. Check the weather forecast each afternoon during the winter months and grit when the conditions set out in the gritting plan are met.
2. Clear snow and ice from designated areas in line with the school's gritting plan, starting with the Red Route.
3. Report on the condition of the site to the Headteacher before 7am when severe weather is forecast.
4. Ensure all snow-clearing equipment is in good working condition and supplies of grit and salt are monitored and replenished.
5. Temporarily close hazardous access areas in accordance with the gritting plan, using appropriate signage, cones and barriers.
6. Keep a gritting record, as set out in the Records section of this policy.
7. Regularly check gritted pathways throughout the day to assess whether re-freezing or additional snowfall has created new hazards, and reapply grit as necessary.
8. When working alone on site early in the morning, let the Headteacher know when they are on site and when they have finished.
9. Inform the Headteacher as soon as possible if unable to travel to school due to severe road conditions or illness.

Deputy Headteacher:

1. Make the decision on opening or closing the school if the Headteacher cannot be contacted.
2. Act as the designated contact for overseeing gritting and clearance in the absence of the Building Officer and Headteacher.
3. Ensure that emergency procedures for extreme weather are followed.

Governing Body:

1. Approve the winter weather plan, including the snow and ice clearing procedure.
2. Ensure adequate resources are allocated for effective implementation of the policy.
3. Monitor that snow and ice procedures are being followed.

Staff:

1. Report to the Building Officer or Headteacher if any gritted areas have become hazardous.
2. Take responsibility for their own health and safety and that of colleagues during severe weather.
3. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for icy and snowy conditions.
4. Assist in notifying parents and pupils of any temporary access changes due to extreme weather conditions.

Parents/Carers:

1. Keep to the designated gritted pathways when entering and leaving the school grounds.
2. Collect their child promptly if weather conditions worsen.
3. Ensure the school has up-to-date contact information for emergency notifications.
4. Wear suitable footwear when dropping off or collecting children.
5. Ensure their child is dressed appropriately for winter conditions, including sensible footwear and a warm coat.
6. Supervise their children before and after school (before 8:40am and after 3:35pm) to prevent them from playing on ungritted areas.

Volunteers:

Volunteers who help with snow clearance will be given guidance on safe practice by the Building Officer. They should use the school's equipment, wear suitable footwear, take regular breaks and only work in the areas they have been asked to clear.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure their own safety, especially given the school's location on a slope. Paths may become slippery throughout the day, and extreme caution should be exercised when moving around the premises. If necessary, the school will contact the council's highways service (Streets Ahead) to request gritting on public footpaths outside the school.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

1. Wheelchair users can access the school via the workroom entrance, the Year 6 cloakroom or the kitchen/dining hall entrance.
2. Anyone with a disability, or anyone who feels unsafe on icy paths, may enter the school through the main entrance.

COMMUNICATION & AWARENESS

Good communication is essential. Parents and carers will receive the 'Adverse Weather Guidance for Parents and Carers' in the Autumn term. In case of school closure or additional safety advice, messages will be sent to all parents and carers through the school's messaging system. Parents and carers are expected to follow these instructions and pass them on to anyone else who may collect their child.

To ensure awareness and understanding of this policy:

- Staff will receive an annual briefing on winter safety procedures.
- Contractors and external clubs using the school facilities will be informed of designated gritted routes and safety measures.
- In icy conditions, portable warning signs will be put out at the top and lower gates, and cones or barriers will be used to close any area that has not been treated.
- Maps outlining gritted routes will be included in induction packs for new staff, contractors and club providers.

GRITTING PLAN

Routes are gritted when the forecast shows temperatures of 2°C or below, or when frost, ice or snow is forecast. The routes are shown on the gritting map at the end of this policy.

- **Priority 1: Red Route (always maintained if the school is open)**
    - The Red Route covers: the main entrance to the office; the workroom entrance; the kitchen/dining hall entrance; the slope down to the Year 3 entrance; the entrance to the Year 6 cloakroom; the entrances to both Year 4 mobiles and the sports hall; the slope down towards the Year 4 mobiles; the front and back entrances to the after school club; and the top and lower gate entrances onto the school grounds.
    - This route is gritted twice daily.
    - The first treatment is made before 7am.
    - The second treatment is made between 5pm and 6pm, so the route is treated before the overnight frost and ready for the next morning. If the route has become icy during the day, it will also be re-treated before children leave at the end of the school day.
- **Priority 2: Amber Route**
    - This route is gritted twice daily.
    - The first treatment is made before 8am.
- **Priority 3: Blue Route**
    - This route is gritted once the Red and Amber Routes have been treated.
    - Blue areas will be coned off until they have been treated.
- **Priority 4: Green Areas**
    - These areas are gritted once the other three priority routes have been treated.
    - These areas may be cleared later in the day if time and weather conditions permit.

SNOW AND ICE CLEARANCE

When clearing snow and ice, the following approach will be used:

- Snow is cleared before gritting. Salt spread onto deep snow is wasted and turns to slush, which can refreeze.
- Snow is pushed to the edges of paths, away from doorways, fire exits, drains and the gritted routes themselves.
- Hot or warm water is never used to clear snow or ice, as it refreezes quickly.
- Rock salt is spread evenly. Salt needs moisture and time to work, so gritting in the early evening before a frost, or early in the morning before people arrive, is most effective.
- In very hard frosts (below around −5°C) rock salt is less effective, so grit or sand is added on the slopes for extra grip.
- Particular attention is paid to slopes, steps, shaded areas and places where water collects, as these refreeze first.
- Fire exits and the routes to them are kept clear at all times.
- Gloves and suitable footwear are worn when handling salt and clearing snow.

RECORDS

The Building Officer will keep a gritting record for every treatment. Each entry will include the date and time, the condition of the area, the areas treated, who treated them and any areas closed off.

Records will be kept in line with the school's records retention schedule, as they may be needed if a slip or fall is reported.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The School's Sloped Location:

- Extra vigilance is required when using pathways, particularly on steeper inclines.
- Staff and parents should expect paths to be checked throughout the day to maintain safety.

Footwear Guidance & Safety Measures:

- Staff, parents and pupils should wear appropriate footwear with good grip to reduce the risk of slipping.
- The warning signs at the gates will remind visitors to take extra care in icy conditions.
- Parents and staff will be reminded via newsletters about the importance of wearing suitable footwear in icy weather.

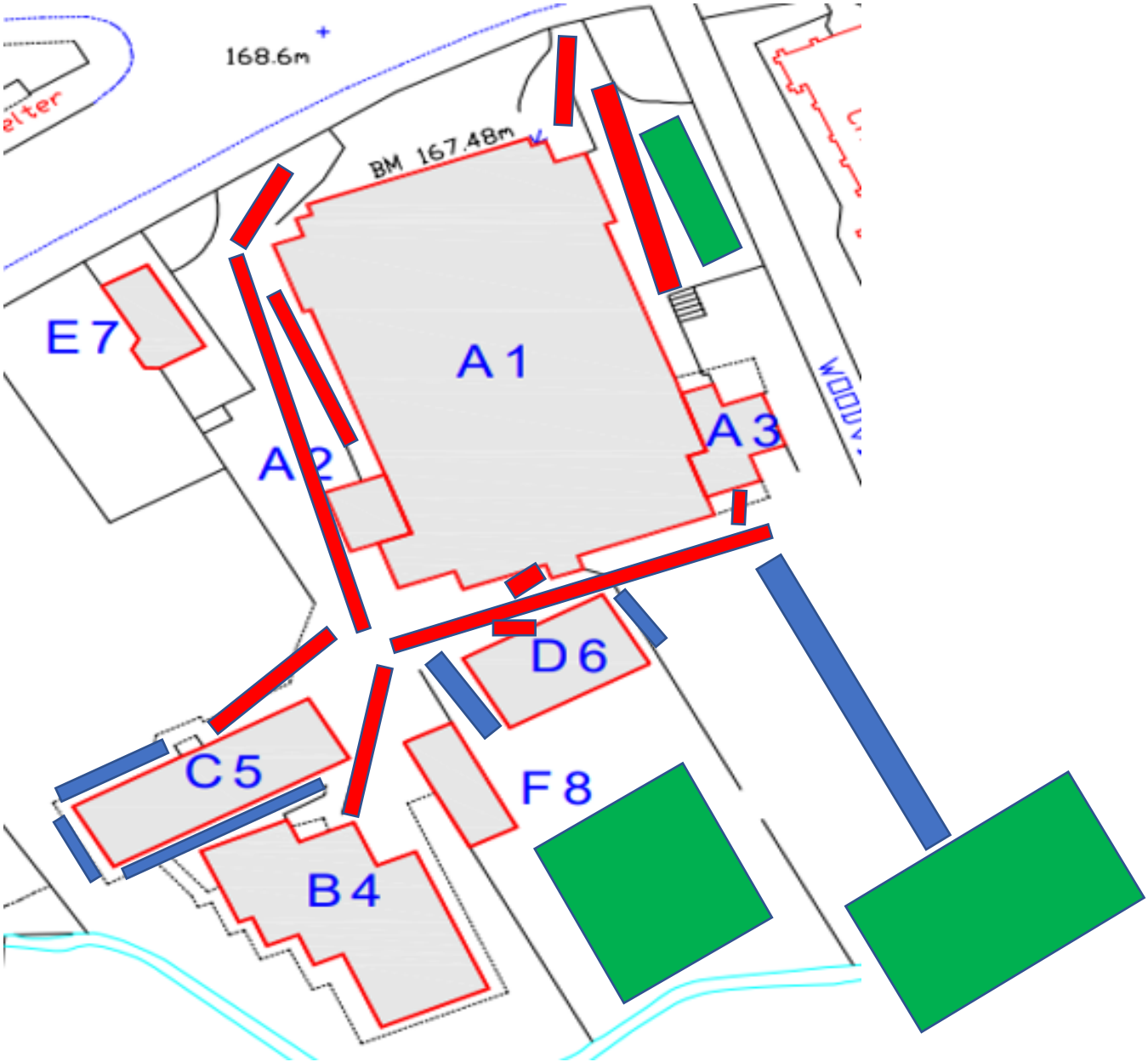
Other Winter Hazards:

- Where snow or ice could fall from roofs or gutters above entrances, the area below will be coned off.
- Snow play at break and lunchtime will only take place in areas agreed by the Headteacher, with staff supervision.
- Any slip or fall will be reported through the school's accident reporting procedure.

Referring to Gritting Maps for Safety:

- Maps outlining designated gritted routes will be available in the school office and on the school website.
- Staff and visitors should familiarise themselves with these routes to ensure they follow the safest paths.
- Updated maps will be distributed to contractors and external club providers to ensure they are aware of safe entry and exit points.

By following these procedures, we aim to maintain a safe environment during winter weather while ensuring that the school remains open whenever possible.



Priority 1

Priority 2

Priority 3

Priority 4

A1 – Main School Building

A2 – Year 5 & 6 Cloakroom

A3 – Year 3 & 5 Cloakroom.

B4 – Sports Hall

C6 – Year 4 Mobile

D6 – Green Room & Year 4 Classroom

E7 – Caretaker House