ERASMUS DARWIN ACADEMY

Policy Title:	**Policy for Academy Closure**
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Member of Staff Responsible:	Headteacher
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Change Record

Version:	Date	Description
1.1	04/03/2025	• A section on partial closure has been added which outlines the reasons why the Academy maybe required too partially close • We have updated the map to include the new build
1.2		
1.3		
1.4		

"Erasmus Darwin Academy promotes the safeguarding and welfare of children in its care; all policies support the "Safeguarding Policy".

POLICY FOR ACADEMY CLOSURE
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POLICY FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMY EMERGENCY CLOSURE

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

To ensure the safety of staff, visitors and pupils at Erasmus Darwin Academy, and to satisfy the legal requirements for the provision of a safe working environment, this document is based on best practice and offers guidance to managers of schools on a common-sense approach to managing an emergency closure. Management have a legal duty to take 'reasonable' steps to keep their workplaces/premises safe, and employees have a duty to co-operate with the employer in terms of health and safety. Appendix 2 outlines the roles and responsibilities for each member of staff should a decision be made to close the Academy for any reason.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A CLOSURE AS A RESULT OF SNOW

Site Management Team

- Responsible for ensuring (before 1st October each year) that all sites under their control are fully equipped with appropriate snow clearing and protective equipment.
- Adequate stocks of rock salt and sand/grit etc are to be obtained from an approved supplier and shall not contain ammonia. COSHH Safety Data Sheet for the product needs to be obtained and adhered to. Consideration should be given to procuring alternative de- icing materials during periods of extreme weather when rock salt will be unavailable for non-highway use.
- Responsible for rearranging staff to ensure snow and ice clearance is carried out and continued if freezing conditions prevail.
- Responsible for ensuring that all Health and Safety aspects are addressed as per Health and Safety Law and specific Academy Health and Safety actions as a result of the last Health and Safety audit.

Other site staff

- Responsible for the immediate clearance of snow and ice in designated areas, in line with the Premises Policy & gritting plan.
- Responsible for ensuring that equipment provided to clear snow and ice is adequate for the purpose and maintained in a satisfactory condition, supplies of rock salt and sand/grit mix should be monitored throughout the winter period and replenished promptly.

All Staff

- Responsible for reporting to the Site Manager any situation where the recommended action contained within the premises winter clearance policy/gritting plan has not been carried out.
- Responsible for safeguarding own and colleagues' health & safety in bad weather. Staff should also wear footwear/clothing appropriate to the conditions.

3. FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Treatment of Paths

Should be made as clear as possible. The gritted paths document (Appendix 1) should be consulted and actions taken to determine the paths that should be cleared immediately and the ones that may be left until later (you can use your clearance/gritting plan as part of your priority assessment by colour coding clearance routes). With this in mind, it may be necessary for some entrances/areas to be temporarily closed, this could be achieved by taping off areas that continue to be a slip hazard as long as management have given consideration to the maintenance of emergency escape routes. This information should be communicated to staff & parents as soon as possible.

Other Areas

Please Note: Whilst it is not appropriate for staff to clear or grit areas falling outside the premises boundary, e.g. pavements/public footpaths, roads forming part of the public highway, Staff employed on snow clearance should consider clearing the immediate footway and access points to the premises.

When to grit/salt

- Whenever there is a risk of air temperatures dropping sufficiently to create ice / freezing conditions.
- A good indication of these conditions is when the Council's Highways vehicles are out gritting/salting the roads, check the councils website for our planned actions, also check local weather reports.
- To minimise risk from snow and ice as well as gritting and snow clearing consider closure of some routes, particularly outside stairs, ladders and walkways on roofs'.
- Remember even weak sun will melt ice and assist the process.
- Pay special attention to areas that are shaded, as they may not thaw out during daylight hours.
- Once an area has been gritted/salted, it should continue to be treated on a regular basis until the risk of ice has passed.
- To gain the most economical and environmental solution the minimum amount of salt should be used, as a guide a good handful is sufficient to treat 1 m2.
- There is no advantage in gritting/salting deep snow; this should be cleared from the path first.

Method of Clearance

A pathway of at least one-meter-wide (or wider where possible) should be cleared, this will allow suitable access for pedestrians and pushchairs/ wheelchairs. Snow and ice should be completely removed using a suitable snow scraper or shovel, snow and ice should NOT be brushed, or dissolved using hot water, as this will make surfaces more hazardous. Once the path has been cleared rock salt should be used to assist in providing extra grip. During exceptional periods a mix of rock salt and sharp sand should be used.

Paths should be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure freezing or further 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 premises (e.g. steep pathways, car parks, etc) to avoid risks to staff, pupils or visitors. An assessment of the situation should be made by site staff in conjunction with the Site Team/Head Teacher or designated member of staff.

Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit, but generally it is suggested that attempts are not made to clear car parking areas/spaces themselves, unless snow is so heavy that essential vehicles (e.g. emergency vehicles, delivery lorries etc) are unable to gain access to the site.

All persons clearing snow should be provided with suitable snow scrapers, shovels, rock salt /sharp sand, protective gloves, footwear and clothing (i.e. high visibility vests), staff should take regular breaks from the task.

This note is for guidance and to ensure current best practice is followed. Use in conjunction with appropriate risk assessments and the premises path gritting plan.

Partial Closure

In the event of unforeseen and extreme circumstances, the decision may be made to partially close the school to some Year groups. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of partial might include the following

- Specific year groups to remain at home
- Rotation systems for different cohorts
- Closure of specific buildings or sections of the building
- Modified timetables
- A delayed start to the Academy day

Reasons for partial close could include:

Severe Weather Conditions
- Heavy snowfall, flooding, or extreme temperatures
- Weather warnings from meteorological services
- Unsafe travel conditions for staff and students

Facilities Issues
- Heating system failures
- Water supply disruptions
- Electrical system failures
- Structural damage to buildings
- Essential maintenance requiring evacuation of specific areas
- IT issues including cyber attacks

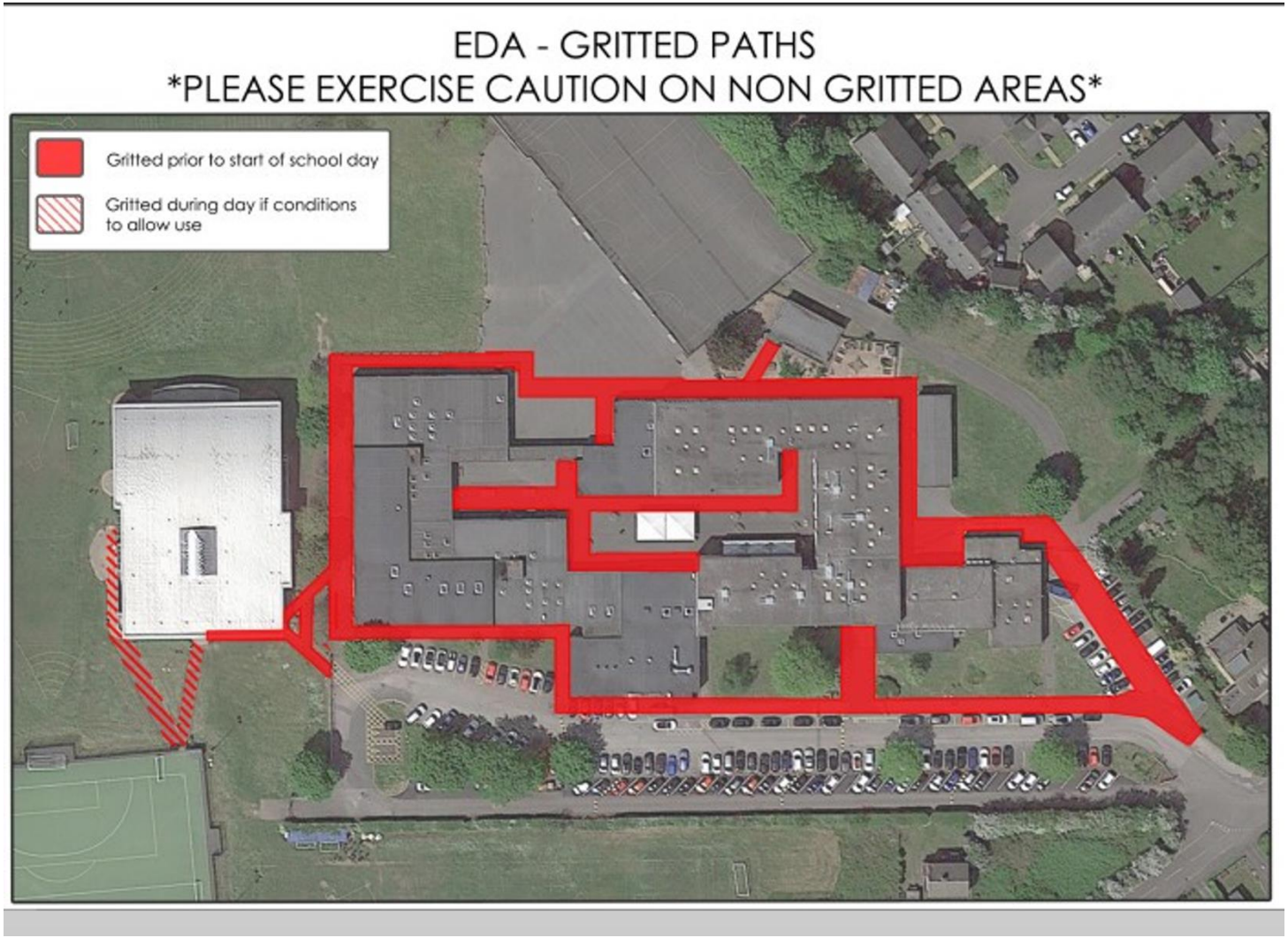
Staffing Shortages
- Insufficient teaching staff to maintain safe supervision ratios
- Absence of key personnel necessary for specific departments

- Industrial action affecting specific departments

Health and Safety Concerns
- Local disease outbreaks
- Public health emergencies
- Environmental hazards (gas leaks, chemical spills near school)
- Compromised building safety

External Events
- Civil emergencies
- Major transport disruptions
- Local security incidents
- Use of school facilities as emergency centres

APPENIDIX 1


EDA - GRITTED PATHS
PLEASE EXERCISE CAUTION ON NON GRITTED AREAS
Gritted prior to start of school day
Gritted during day if conditions to allow use

Appendix 2 – EDA Academy Emergency Closure Communication Protocol

The information below outlines the protocol for Academy closure.

- Site Management Team to inform Headteacher and Estates Manager of the site situation upon their arrival with message in new 'Academy Closure' WhatsApp group
- Headteacher to inform the Senior Leadership Team.

In the event Headteacher is unable to make the commute into the Academy, the Site Management Team will inform the Estates Manager regarding the decision to remain open or to close. Should the decision be made to close, the following actions need to take place:

- Headteacher (Deputy Headteacher in reserve) to post message in the Academy Closure WhatsApp group
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team to post on social media (twitter) and IT manager who will post on the website
- Deputy Headteacher (Another member of the Senior Leadership Team in reserve or Headteachers PA) to send an SMS via EduLink to staff and students (actions for additional staff can be seen below regarding EduLink CPD)
- Deputy Headteacher (Another Member of the Senior Leadership Team in reserve) to send an email to all professionals which will outline learning arrangements for the day
- Office Manager (Deputy Headteacher in reserve) to send relevant follow up letter to families via EduLink at 08:00am (2 letters – closed decision or delayed start)
- Headteacher to notify LA (where required)
- Office Manager (Headteacher in the Office Managers absence) to notify Chair of Governors

Afternoon Decisions

- Later in the day, Headteacher to inform staff of the arrangements for the following day
- Office Manager (Deputy Headteacher or Headteachers PA in reserve) to send any correspondence to families via EduLink
- Letting's decisions to be made by a member of the Site Management Team and communicated with the Estates Manager and the rest of the Site Management Team

All Leaders to check their areas of responsibility are aware of any decisions made. Following the actions above, all professionals are required to check their email for further information. Where the decision allows, we will endeavour to notify staff before 07:30am.