

from the Headmaster
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Dear Parents,

'SNOW DAYS' POLICY

ATTENDING SCHOOL – V – BAD WEATHER CONDITIONS.

As very cold weather with snowfall is being forecast, I am writing to explain our policy on 'snow days' and their possible effects on the school.

We need to have a *robust* 'weather policy', because the children's education will suffer in the long run if we were to close the school every time we have plenty of snow. Obviously, such a policy must be sensible, without any traces of recklessness, but on the other hand it should not follow the present day trend whereby at the first sign of snow a "day off" is declared. *Real discomfort or difficulty is part of life and children, as well as adults, must learn to cope and to adapt their mental attitude according to circumstances.*

We must do our best to draw a distinction between:

- a) **very unpleasant and even dreadful weather** *from*
- b) **genuinely dangerous weather conditions.**

Should the pattern of English weather permanently change for the worse (global warming [!] or whatever the cause) we shall never get any school work done?

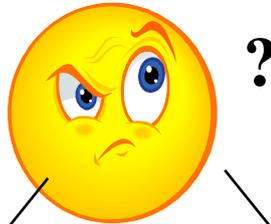
Therefore, the policy of St John's will be that if the conditions are as described above in **a)**, both the Prep. and Senior schools will continue to function as close to normal as possible. Even if four or five pupils are present in the class, lessons will go on according to the normal lesson plans. Whether or not the lesson or part of the lesson is repeated later for the absent pupils will, of course, depend on the number of absentees.

If the conditions are as described above in **b)**, then school *will* be closed **and a text to this effect will be sent to your mobile** as soon as we can assess the situation as accurately as is reasonably possible.

The final and most important question is: How can the school clearly define "**genuinely dangerous weather conditions**"? This is very difficult to answer conclusively, but a decision will be reached after weighing up the situation and discussing the options with senior members of staff.

Ultimately, as we are teachers and not experienced weather forecasters, the decision will be a *subjective* one and therefore open to some reasonable doubt. We do not wish to put the children at risk by any mistaken assessment. After all, our idea of a *calculated risk* may not be the same as yours. **Hence, please be assured that we respect your right to decide for yourself whether or not to send your child to school** whenever we are faced with difficult weather conditions in the future.

Weighing up the situation.



Keep the school open! But what if . . .

Danger on the roads: slippery ice, getting stuck in the snow, danger from other road users.

Getting stranded at the school: snowfall worse than expected as the day progresses.

Children and teachers cannot concentrate. Very cold, despite boilers being full on throughout the day.

Shut for the day? But . . .

Close the school based on weather 'warning' forecasts - only to find that the predicted *terrible* conditions *do not* materialise.

Declare the school closed for the day. Decision based on sound *common sense* by looking out of the window - only to find that within an hour or two the snow has stopped and the sun has come out.

Lessons disrupted. Time and tide *and exams* wait for no man.

Parents are not able to make arrangement for someone to look after their child, yet they really must get to work!

So, in a nutshell: If you consider conditions to be too dangerous, you will be at perfect liberty to keep your child at home, despite a "school open as normal" text message. What such a message will mean is that we, at the school, shall be doing our utmost to carry on as usual. We shall, nevertheless, be keeping a weather eye open and will, of course, keep parents of pupils at the school informed of the situation if it changes for the worse.

Mr. Andrew Tardios,
Headmaster.

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