



West Heath Community Association

Snow & Severe Weather Protocol

West Heath Community Association is a registered charity (no: 1124993)
and has limited liability being a company limited by guarantee
registered in England & Wales (no: 06570815)

Snow & Severe Weather Protocol

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, every year. West Heath Community Association will amend this policy, following consultations with the Community Centre Manager where appropriate.

Date of last review:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Change</i>
<i>January 2026</i>	<i>New document created.</i>
<i>April 2026</i>	<i>Approved by Board</i>

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1. Purpose

This protocol sets out how the community centre will prepare for, respond to, and operate during snow, ice, and severe winter weather. The aim is to:

- Keep staff, volunteers, and visitors safe
- Ensure the building remains accessible where possible
- Provide clear decision-making steps for closures or reduced services
- Minimise disruption to essential community activities

2. Responsibilities

Community Centre Manager

- Monitor weather forecasts and local authority alerts
- Decide on building opening/closure in line with this protocol
- Communicate decisions to staff, volunteers, and user groups
- Ensure gritting, snow clearance, and safety checks are completed
- Record decisions and any incidents

Staff & Volunteers

- Follow instructions from the Duty Manager
- Report hazards (ice, leaks, blocked paths) immediately
- Assist with gritting and snow clearance if safe and trained
- Support communication to user groups

User Groups / Hirers

- Follow centre guidance on safe access
- Make their own decisions about whether to proceed with sessions
- Inform the centre if they cancel due to weather

3. Monitoring Weather Conditions

The Centre Manager will monitor:

- Met Office weather warnings
- Local authority updates
- Road and public transport conditions
- On-site conditions (paths, car park, entrances)

Monitoring should begin as soon as a yellow warning is issued and increase during amber or red warnings.

4. Decision-Making: Open, Partially Open, or Closed

4.1 The Centre Will Remain Open If:

- Paths and entrances can be cleared and gritted
- Staff can travel safely
- Heating and utilities are functioning
- No significant risk to visitors

4.2 The Centre May Partially Open If:

- Only some rooms are safe to use
- Staff availability is reduced
- Outdoor areas remain hazardous
- Only essential or pre-booked activities can run

4.3 The Centre Will Close If:

- Travel is unsafe for staff or visitors
- The building cannot be safely accessed
- Heating or power is disrupted
- A Met Office red warning is in place
- The Centre Manager judges that risk cannot be controlled

Closure decisions should be made by 7:30am for daytime activities and by 3pm for evening sessions where possible.

5. Site Safety Procedures

5.1 Gritting

- Gritting should take place early morning and late afternoon
- Priority areas:
- Main entrance
- Fire exits
- Paths and ramps
- Car park pedestrian routes
- Use only approved grit/salt stored on site

5.2 Snow Clearance

- Clear snow before gritting
- Only staff/volunteers who are physically able should assist
- Use shovels and equipment provided
- Avoid creating piles that block visibility or access

5.3 Indoor Safety

- Place wet-floor signs at entrances

- Provide mats for snow-covered footwear
- Check heating is functioning
- Monitor for leaks from melting snow

6. Travel Safety for Staff & Volunteers

Staff and volunteers should:

- Avoid travel if roads are unsafe
- Inform the Centre Manager if delayed or unable to attend
- Work from home where possible (admin, planning, online tasks)
- Not feel pressured to travel in unsafe conditions

7. Communication Plan

When the Centre Is Open

- Post updates on social media and website
- Notify regular groups of any changes

When the Centre Is Closed

- Update website and social media
- Email or text all staff and volunteers
- Notify hirers and user groups
- Put a notice on the building entrance if possible

8. Activities & Hirers

- Hirers may cancel without penalty during severe weather
- Staff should confirm room temperatures are safe before sessions
- Outdoor activities will be cancelled if surfaces are icy

9. Emergency Situations

If someone slips, falls, or is injured:

- Follow first aid procedures
- Record the incident in the accident book
- Review gritting/clearance actions
- Adjust the protocol if needed

If heating fails:

- Evacuate to a warm area
- Close the building if temperatures fall below safe levels

10. Review & Continuous Improvement

This protocol will be reviewed:

- Annually

- After any severe weather event
- After any incident related to snow or ice

Feedback from staff, volunteers, and user groups will be used to improve future responses.