**Houghton Conquest Lower School**

**Severe Snow/Ice Plan for Parents and Families**

*“Schools should, wherever possible, stay open in severe weather. They play a key role in their communities and by staying open help both their pupils and parents. ” – Department for Education*

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread and prolonged disruption. Schools are often affected and it can be difficult to maintain an education service.

As a fundamental principle every effort must be made to keep schools open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend. However schools may close due to ‘unavoidable’ circumstances. Those circumstances being that it is no longer safe for staff or pupils to be onsite.

We recognise that it is important that our school remains open so parents are able to work and pupils can continue to learn. Houghton Conquest Lower School will make every effort to prepare for severe snow/ice this winter by:

* undertaking an early morning risk assessment for snow and ice on days of severe weather before taking the decision to close
* gritting pathways
* clearing access points
* boiler maintenance

If we do experience severe snow/ice resulting in hazardous conditions, we may have to take the decision to close the school. Once this decision has been made the easiest way we can notify parents and carers is by texting through our group call system.

We also notify parents via the Central Bedfordshire SOS website. To determine whether Houghton Conquest Lower School is open or closed please visit;

<https://apps.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS/>.

Search for the school in the search box. We also recommend parents sign up for Email alerts on the Central Bedfordshire website. This service will send an email alert to let parents know if Houghton Conquest Lower School is closed.

**What can you do to help?**

Please visit the site detailed below for more information about gritting routes and travel issues around Central Bedfordshire so you can plan your journey.

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/55/transport_roads_and_parking/594/salting_and_gritting_-_winter_road_gritting_and_salt_bins>

* Please can you provide a packed lunch from home in case school meals cannot be transported.
* Don’t forget suitable warm clothing – gloves, hats, scarves, wellies etc. or even a change of clothing.
* Consider drop off after 9am when the temperatures generally improve and roads are less busy and hazardous – we do not mind as some of our staff will be late too for the same reason!
* Volunteer to stay on after drop off to help staff who have made it in.
* Ensure emergency contact numbers are up to date with school office.
* If you are a working parent or feel you may have a problem with a sudden earlier pick up, please could you put a back-up plan in place with another family member or parent and inform the school. This will allow staff to leave earlier for their safety if weather dictates.

Many thanks for your support in helping Houghton Conquest Lower School remain open during periods of severe snow/ice.