



Diocese of St. Albans



ST MARY'S  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

12 December 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you this evening to let you know, with as much notice as possible, that we will be closed again tomorrow\*. Work will be posted online as it was today – please ensure your child completes work set, as well as having time outside to enjoy the snow.

(\*The temperatures are forecast to be 0°C to -3°C tonight, but in the unlikely event that there is thaw overnight, I will revisit this decision and inform you by 7am).

**Footwear for when we re-open:** Students may wear non-uniform shoes for the walk to school for the rest of the week when we re-open, *providing they give more protection from wet and from slipping over than their usual shoes*. Trainers and canvas shoes are therefore not allowed because they will not help with wet or icy conditions; boots will be permitted (providing they are waterproof). Please bear in mind that shoes/boots that are good for walking on snow/ice may not be the most safe or comfortable for indoor surfaces, so please make the decision whether your child should bring a change of footwear for indoor use when we re-open (indoor floors will get wet in these conditions). Other uniform will still be as normal.

If you would like to understand why school is closed tomorrow, please read on.

The decision to close in these circumstances is never an easy one to take. I fully appreciate the impact on learning, as well as childcare provision for younger students, and so please do not think I took this decision lightly. Each school has its own unique set of circumstances that mean that some schools in an area will stay shut whilst others will open. The DfE says ..

*'Closing the school may be the right decision where the judgement is that students or staff face significant risk of serious injury in school or travelling to school'.*

The safety of the community has been at the centre of my decision. The site team have spent the day clearing the pathways around school, making them safe for pedestrians when we return. Our car parks are too big for manual clearance so early this morning we contacted our grounds maintenance team to get their assistance in clearing these large, tarmac areas. With the wider demands that the snow brings, the earliest they can arrive is 10am tomorrow.

I drove to school this morning; if you saw our photos on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), you will see that we had 10-15cm of snow overnight and it may come as little surprise to know that I got stuck close to the entrance of the car park and had to use a shovel to free my car! With the vast majority of staff and students arriving by car, the concern that I have is that if I allow cars on site tomorrow morning before the car parks are cleared, not only could it be dangerous for drivers on the snow (with staff and parents/carers getting stuck), it will also compact the snow to an extent that it will not be clearable by mechanical means.

WE BELIEVE EVERYONE IS EQUAL: EVERYONE DESERVES THE BEST

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Headteacher: Mr Nicholas Simms B.Sc. (Hons), NPQH

*'Students feel happy and safe at school'* OFSTED 2019

*'An exceptionally inclusive and caring community'* SIAMS Inspection 2020

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Our car parks are on a slope and with temperatures not due to get above 3°C until Saturday, we would be left with treacherous car parks all week because any thaw will be incredibly slow, and then refreeze overnight.

I thank you for your support during this and hope that you stay well and warm during this cold period.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms  
Headteacher

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