

PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER



With winter fast approaching, Marsh's Education Practice recommends that schools take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of costly losses and disruption to the day-to-day running of the school.

Storms, flooding, and severe weather are all natural aspects of our climate in Ireland, and preparation for weather events can assist greatly in ensuring your school minimises the risks that might arise.

The checklist below can guide schools in preparing and dealing with any significant weather events over the coming winter period:

FROST

PROTECTING THE SCHOOL BUILDING

1. Check annually the condition of your pipes. Are they properly lagged for cold weather conditions?
2. Ensure you know where your main water turnoff valve is.
3. Maintain electricity supply to ensure operation of frost stats.
4. Maintain heat in the building and ensure thermostats are correctly set, that is, 35°F or 2°C if located indoors, or 32°F or 0° if outdoors.
5. Remember to protect your oil supply from freezing. The oil supply pipe can be protected with weather-proof insulation and a tarpaulin cover will provide emergency protection to the tank.
6. If air vents in the boiler room are closed off, leave a sufficient opening to allow an adequate supply of air for combustion.

PROTECTING YOUR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND PARENTS

1. Ensure you have a supply of salt to ensure the school grounds and entrances are kept free of frost.
2. Identify the outdoor areas most likely to be affected by ice or frost, for example, school entrances, car parks, or pedestrian walkways.
3. Divert staff, pupils, and parents to less slippery walkways and barrier off any areas where there is a risk to injury.
4. Monitor the temperature on an ongoing basis and keep up to date with weather forecasts.

FLOODING/STORM

BEFORE THE FLOOD/STORM:

1. Ensure your gutters, downpipes, and drains are cleaned and cleared annually.
2. Ensure all roof slates/tiles, gutters, and aerials are secure.
3. Ensure the school grounds are clear of loose materials and rubbish.
4. Where possible, move valuable equipment, appliances, and furniture to high ground, to avoid direct contact with water.
5. Find out how to turn off gas, electricity, and water at the mains if required.
6. Ensure school has sand bags in place at all entrances to the property.
7. Plug sinks/baths and put sandbags in all toilet bowls to prevent backflow.
8. Check that all large trees close to the school premises are maintained – that is, branches trimmed and checked for rot or decay.
9. Keep a list of useful numbers (including your insurance telephone and policy numbers).

AFTER A FLOOD/STORM

1. Review the damage and contact your insurance broker/ company immediately.
2. Keep photographic evidence of any damage and make any emergency repairs to prevent further damage or loss.
3. Do not touch or move fallen cables; contact the electricity supply board immediately.
4. Avoid electric shocks – do not touch extension cables out of water.
5. Avoid direct contact with floodwater – it may be contaminated with sewage.
6. Wear protective clothes, boots, and rubber gloves while assessing the damage in the school.
7. Clean taps and run them before use.
8. Ensure all power and gas supplies are checked by a professional electrician or plumber before turning them back on.

CONTACT US

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