



## Inclement Weather Policy

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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy explains the requirement for employees to attend work during severe or inclement weather. Its purpose is to:
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and employees should an academy have to deal with severe, inclement weather
  - Ensure that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather.
- 1.2 Once the decision to close an academy has been taken, the Principal must also notify other interested parties, including transportation and catering providers, of the decision. If the decision to close the academy is made after academy transport has started then staff should ensure that the parents of those children are contacted before being returned to their home. If necessary the children should be kept in the academy until the parents are contacted.

## 2 Definition

- 2.1 Inclement weather can be defined as snow, ice, fog and floods, which render journeys by road and public and private transport extremely hazardous.
- 2.2 This includes those conditions in which the Met Office, police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys or indeed travel at all.

## 3 General

- 3.1 All academies must have contingency procedures to remain open wherever possible. The procedures must identify that the decision to close the academy will only be made as a last resort.
- 3.2 The responsibility for deciding to close the academy because of severe inclement weather lies with the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, as the Principal must make the decision in the light of local circumstances. The safety of individual employees who may need to travel further than pupils should also be considered when decisions are made.
- 3.3 This policy aims to maintain a service to parents and pupils for as long as is reasonably practical and that a partial closure of an academy should be considered before complete closure. The Principal should also consider how the service can be delivered to the pupils when he/she only has a percentage of his/her staff available.
- 3.4 The interest and safety of children and employees are paramount under these circumstances. Allowing children to walk home unsupervised in potentially difficult or dangerous conditions or to return to an empty house may not be in their best interests. The age of the child in question must be taken into consideration when a decision is made.

- 3.5 Employees should only be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, but decisions must be made on an individual basis.

## 4 Considerations – Pupils

- 4.1 Principals must comply with any request from a transport provider that wishes to transport certain pupils early as the operators may be responding to meteorological warnings. However this does not mean that all pupils should be sent home early.
- 4.2 It may be the case that only those pupils travelling on home to academy transport, or those living in rural areas, need to be sent home early. There may be no safety benefits in sending home early those individuals who walk. Indeed, this may cause further problems and may impact on other services if parents need to leave their place of work early in order to look after their children.
- 4.3 Every reasonable effort should be made to contact parents to inform them of the academy's closure and to ensure the safety of pupils after they leave the academy. Principals should consider whether it is preferable to keep children at the academy until they are collected. Parents should be informed in advance of the academy's procedures in the event of inclement weather, and advised to listen to various radio stations for announcements about closures and requests to collect pupils.

## 5 Considerations – Employees

- 5.1 It is essential that employees who are going to be late or are unable to attend work telephone the Principals as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than thirty minutes before the start of the academy day. Clearly there may be times when this is not possible and allowances will be given in circumstances when there is no access to a telephone. However contact must be made as soon as reasonably practicable in such instances.
- 5.2 Employees are advised that, in circumstances where conditions prevent their attendance at their normal place of work, then they and their Principal must agree an appropriate course of action or suitable alternative, for example:
- Undertaking appropriate professional duties
  - Undertaking CPD which must be agreed with the Principal
  - Any other reasonable local arrangement as agreed between employee and Principal
  - Taking the day/part day as unpaid leave
  - It would not be unreasonable for the Principal to have prepared CPD activities and if the academy is closed that the CPD activity could be undertaken at home.
- 5.3 Employees may be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of:

- Their personal safety or that of a dependent, but decisions must be made on an individual basis and sanctioned by the Principal, and consideration given to adopting one of the alternative provisions stated in paragraph 5.2.
- 5.4 If the academy has been closed by the Principal, **all** employees will be paid at their normal daily rate. This will include supply teachers who have attended the academy to find that the decision to close has been taken or have been booked and are informed by phone that the academy has been closed.
- 5.5 Any decision regarding leaving the academy must be made in consultation with the Principal.
- 5.6 If pupils are sent home early due to hazardous driving conditions, consideration to employees who travel to work by car should also be taken by the Principal and sent home if appropriate.
- 5.7 In the event that the academy remains closed and the weather conditions do not improve, resulting in absence of more than one day, employees should maintain regular contact with the Principal.