



# Adverse Weather Policy

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## Changes to this edition

No changes

## **1. Aims**

The Trust Board's aim is that, wherever possible, schools within the Trust will remain open during adverse weather in order to maintain the optimum level of education service, having regard to the safety and well-being of pupils and employees, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 1.1 To make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- 1.2 To make clear the grounds for school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- 1.3 To advise and inform employees of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

## **2. Application**

- 2.1 The policy will apply to all employees within Minerva Learning Trust.
- 2.2 Any dispute or grievance regarding decisions made under this policy will be dealt with through the Trust grievance procedure.

## **3. Decision to Close/Amend arrangements**

- 3.1 The decision to close the school, both before or during the school day, will be made by the Headteacher, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust will be informed.
- 3.2 The Headteacher will inform the Chair of the Local Governing Body, if available, and the Site Manager/PFI Contractor when deciding about school closure. The Headteacher should also consult with any appropriate staff, e.g. exams.
- 3.3 In the absence of the Headteacher, the appropriate deputising arrangements in school will apply, and responsibility assumed for decision making in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.
- 3.4 When making the decision to close, the Headteacher will undertake a risk assessment and make every reasonable effort to remain open during adverse weather conditions. The risk assessment should include consideration of the condition of the site and the likelihood that it will present danger to users of the site, contingency plans for catering, local transport arrangements, weather forecast and whether employee numbers are sufficient to operate the site safely. The Headteacher is responsible for health and safety and for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are completed.
- 3.5 Consideration should be given to alternative strategies to closure, such as the variation of opening and closure times, opening to specific age groups, varying activities, alternative provision and partial opening; however, in all cases, risk assessments should be undertaken before a decision is made.

- 3.6 In the event the school needs to close during the day, employees will be expected to stay to supervise pupils until they have left the site unless the Headteacher gives authorisation otherwise.
- 3.7 There may be circumstances where the Headteacher believes it is safe for employees to attend the site but close to pupils, or it is necessary to adjust the start and finish times of the school day, particularly where it would enable everyone to travel safely.
- 3.8 In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under appropriate supervision. The school will strive to continue to provide high quality education in the circumstances.

## 4. Communication

- 4.1 All schools are expected to have in place a communications plan as part of business continuity planning for informing staff and parents/carers at the earliest opportunity in the event of a school closure or late start.
- 4.2 In order to facilitate communication regarding the opening/closure of the school, employees will be asked to provide an appropriate contact number for text messaging.
- 4.3 In addition to this, the school will communicate by messages on the website, communication via the School Alert system, e-mail, text, and Twitter.

See School Alert system – <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolclosures>

and encourage parents to sign up for alerts via:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKSHEFFIELD/subscribers/qualify>

## **5. Employee Expectations**

- 5.1 All employees are expected to make every effort to attend work in order that full or partial services may be provided. Employees should be prepared to make alternative travel arrangements for arriving at work on time or as soon as possible after the normal start time, should adverse weather conditions make this necessary.
- 5.2 The Trust and its schools understand that, whilst employees are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. Employees will need to make their own decisions as to whether it is safe to travel. In reaching this decision, the employee should consider local weather conditions, distance to travel, transport arrangements and fitness to walk.
- 5.3 It is recognised that some employees will have childcare or carer responsibilities or other domestic arrangements which make it difficult to either arrive on time or attend work at all. Employees should make every effort to put in place alternative arrangements; however, there are provisions for dependents' leave, which the Headteacher can approve in these circumstances.
- 5.4 If a decision to close the school is taken overnight/early morning then all staff, teachers and support staff, should be instructed to continue to undertake their duties and work from home, wherever possible. Where this is not possible e.g. due to looking after dependants or because of limited access to technology then, a discussion should take place with the Line Manager.
- 5.5 In the event of school closure partway through the school day, the priority should be placed on getting staff and students home safely, and staff will not be expected to work from home.

## **6. Setting Work for Students**

- 6.1 If a decision to close the school is taken overnight/early in the morning, school leaders should ask teachers to set work for the lessons missed that day. Every effort should be made to provide remote learning for all year groups, but the setting of work for key exam groups should be prioritised by teachers. This work should still be of high quality and linked to the subject's curriculum plan wherever possible.
- 6.2 If the school is closed and students are sent home during the day, then work does not need to be set, and the priority should be placed on getting everyone home safely

## **7. Pay/Working Hours**

- 7.1 Where the Headteacher takes the decision to close the school for either a full or part day, the employee will be paid salary for a normal working day unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in respect of dependents' leave, where the employee has been unable to undertake any work. In these circumstances, the provisions for dependents' leave will apply.

- 7.2 Where a decision is taken to close the school early and employees are allowed to leave, they will not be expected to make up the time at an alternative time or have pay deducted.
- 7.3 Where the school remains open, but the employee cannot attend work, the Headteacher will discuss whether work can be undertaken at home or hours worked at an alternative time. In situations where this is not the case and the employee does not attend, pay will be deducted in accordance with the calculations for unpaid leave set out in the employee's conditions of service, unless an alternative is agreed with the Headteacher under the leave of absence policy.
- 7.4 Employees with a disability, health condition or who are pregnant and are affected by unavoidable travel difficulties and are therefore unable to travel to and from work, may be granted special leave or arrangements to work at home. This will be agreed with the Headteacher as a reasonable adjustment and documented in the employee's personnel file.
- 7.5 Staff who may already have annual leave or other leave approved (e.g. sick leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave) will not be entitled to a day in lieu if the school is closed.
- 7.6 If the Headteacher believes there has been an abuse of the system by an employee, an investigation may be conducted to consider the extent of travel disruption, closure of other schools or circumstances which have prevented the employee from attending work. This may lead to recommendations regarding potential disciplinary action, unauthorised absence and/or deduction of pay depending on the circumstances.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in line with DfE Statutory guidance. At every review, it will be approved by the Trust Board.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

The Trust will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in order to ensure that policies, procedures and practices cater for individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that policies, procedures and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and, where it can't be changed, how it can be improved.

The Trust will monitor the impact of the policy to assess whether there is evidence of a detrimental impact on anyone with a protected characteristic as a result of the application of this policy. The assessment will include consideration of adaptations or changes which can be made to address any issues identified.