



NORTH STAR

COMMUNITY TRUST

Adverse weather policy

Primary and Secondary Academies

January 2021

Scope

During adverse weather, it is the recommendation of the Department for Education and our policy to make every effort to keep our academies open for teaching wherever possible.

The decision to close an academy will only be taken as a last resort further to an assessment which determines an unacceptable risk.

Examples of adverse or severe weather which may affect an academy can include (but are not limited to): -

- snow or prolonged, extremely cold weather
- very strong or gale force winds
- very heavy rain leading to the potential for flooding

Unless they are specifically informed otherwise, staff are expected to come into work as usual and are reminded of their duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions which includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions.

Pathways in the event of snow

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and gritted. Parents, children and visitors will need to be aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Pupils will be reminded of this in assembly. Before and after academy opening hours, parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide or take part in potentially dangerous activities when on the school playground.

In icy conditions the facilities team will salt / grit pathways in the playground but in some circumstances only one pathway may be available and this will be clearly identified. Essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

Closing an academy due to adverse weather and rationale

The decision to close an academy either before or during a school day rests with the Head teacher of that individual academy. Parents / carers should not assume that the status of one academy should affect the others.

The academy will only be closed for teaching if one or more of the following conditions apply: -

- conditions on-site are dangerous.

- severe weather has caused significant problems with fuel, water or catering supplies
- conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.
- insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the academy running safely.

When severe weather has passed, the Head teacher and appropriate members of the Facilities team will conduct a visual check to the premises before announcing it will re-open.

In the absence of the Head teacher, a deputy head teacher, or on-site member of the academy's senior leadership team will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the adverse weather policy.

Decision to close an academy closure before the school day

Be it the day / night before or on the morning of the day in question, once the decision to officially close the academy has been made, the Head teacher will arrange for this decision to be communicated to parents as soon as possible and in the following ways: -

- Notification of closure to be clearly posted on the academy's website.
- Parents / carers to be notified via a text message to the mobile number we hold on record
- Updates to our social media accounts (facebook, twitter etc)
- Notification of closure posted on the academy gates as soon as practicable
- Recorded telephone message on the academy's phone line as soon as practicable

Decision to close an academy closure during the school day

Should pupil need to leave during the school day due to worsening conditions; a text message will be sent to parents / carers informing them that the academy is closed and to collect their children. Wherever possible, parents will be additionally contacted by a telephone call.

Once notified of a closure, it would be preferable for those parents who are coming to collect their children do so without telephoning the academy first unless absolutely necessary so as to avoid blocking the telephone lines.

Parents of secondary academy pupils should confirm with the office that they consent for their children to make their own way home.

Emergency supervision of pupils

Supervision will be available in school until such time as pupils can be collected however we would expect parents to make an effort to collect their children as soon as possible.

Responsibilities of parents / carers

Parents / carers are expected to check the academy websites, text messages and our social media accounts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The academy will make all practicable efforts to keep parents / carers informed as to the situation with the academy during adverse weather conditions as we understand that such conditions and the possibility of closure may place considerable difficulties upon them.

Whilst we endeavour to ensure contact details are up to date for the purposes of text message communication, it is also the responsibility and duty of parents and carers to inform us if any contact details have changed as per the [home-school agreement](#)

Recording absence

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

Where the academy is not officially closed, parents should still endeavour to contact the academy to let us know they are on their way or if they are likely to be seriously delayed as we still have a statutory duty to record attendance correctly.

We appreciate that adverse or severe weather may mean that pupils arrive later than normal.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be officially closed without first obtaining official confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school risk their child being recorded as un-authorised absence as per our [attendance policy](#).