# Cedars Academy

# Adverse Weather Policy

## Reviewed: June 2019

## To be next Reviewed: June 2020

## By: JR/F&S committee

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This policy outlines the required shared procedure for dealing with severe weather including school closure (normally due to snow) to ensure that pupils can stay or be returned home safely. It is based on Local Authority guidance.

The Local Authority is under a statutory duty to provide an education service in which schools are open to pupils for 190 days per year. Decisions to close either school will, therefore, only be taken when the safety or welfare of the pupils during their time at the school or travelling to school is likely to be adversely affected by local circumstances. The school will not normally close for additional teacher days.

Because of the size and diverse nature of the County, judgments on the most appropriate action to take can best be formed locally. The Local Authority will, therefore, be guided by the advice it receives from the Headteacher (or Deputy/AHT in their absence).

### AVOIDING CLOSURE

#### Emergency Timetable for Snow Disruption

When snow falls in sufficient amounts to disrupt the normal running of the timetable school may decide not to close but to move to an emergency timetable.

The decision to move to an emergency timetable lies with the Head Teacher/AHT in their absence. However, decisions need to be informed by the potential impact of teaching across the school.

If a school remains open to children, then school meals should continue to be served, provided that school meals staff are available.

#### Gritting

Access to and movement around school is affected by severe weather (frost and snow). A gritting plan has been agreed between the Facilities Manager and the maintenance cleaner/contractor. This provides for the prompt gritting of access roads, car park and the yard. The maintenance cleaner/contractor will grit those areas, mainly pathways, inaccessible to the gritting machine. In the case of severe weather GMS are permitted to grit without having to check with the Headteacher or Facilities Manager. In the case of frost (or similar), the Facilities Manager will decide prior to the start of the school day if gritting is necessary.

#### Arrangements for Staff

All staff should ensure that they inform **the school office** and, where possible **the Headteacher or the relevant AHT** (both should be informed if possible) if they are unable to get into school. This should be before 7.45 am which is the approximate time the School Transport departs to pick up pupils in our area. After this time we could face the prospect of large numbers of pupils being on site in poor weather with inadequate supervision.

Staff should ensure that they speak to senior staff rather than a leave a message which in emergency circumstances may not be picked up. They should not assume text messages or e-mails have been received unless there is an immediate response.

Whilst a school may need to be closed for pupils, it might be possible for it to remain open to staff, who will be expected to attend work if reasonably practicable.

## PREPARING PARENTS FOR BAD WEATHER

In the event of a severe weather warning a standard letter should go out to all bus pupils advising what to do. The LA requires that certain information is covered. This includes advice on:

- Checking if buses are running – a list of contact numbers should be provided in the letter
- What to do if they are unsure
- Where to get up-to-date information – county and school websites, local radio etc
- Whether to keep pupils at home or send them into school
- Ensuring that they have a procedure in place for the care of their child if the school has to close early.

A similar warning and guidance should be put on our website.

## CLOSING THE SCHOOLS

### Deciding to Close in Advance

If heavy snow has fallen a decision should be made by 3.00 pm on whether the schools will be open the following day. A letter should be provided to parents to this effect. The Headteacher makes this decision or in their absence the AHT's (coordinating with each other).

### Deciding to Close as a Result of Heavy Overnight Snow

The Facilities Manager should inform the Headteacher and AHT's by 7.00 am of the possibility that the school will be affected by snow or other weather conditions. Senior staff should make their way to school to assess whether the schools need to close or not.

Teaching and non teaching staff should endeavour to inform the relevant school AHT by 7.30 am if they are unable to attend for work. Contact will need to be by mobile due to the need for senior staff to come to school. In the case of no contact the assumption will be that staff can attend to work.

The Headteacher or in their absence the AHT's will make the decision to close or not as close to 7.30 as possible. The priority should be staff and pupil safety.

## PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW ONCE THE DECISION TO CLOSE IS MADE

Once the decision to close has been made the following actions should be taken in sequence:

1. Notify county via e-mail and phone by 7.30 a.m. at the latest.

2. E-mails should state the school(s) name(s) and that it is closing / closed. To verify the closure the following information is also required:
    - Official school name, location and DFE number
    - Radio Newcastle
    - Day and Reason for closure
    - Your name and position in the school
    - A direct contact number for return calls
    - The school website
3. Inform Local Radio.

4. Put a school closure notice on the school website – contact the Headteacher or AHT to do this.
5. Notify staff either direct or via office staff.
6. Notify school transport. See additional information below.

After closing confirm the LA have the information. Closures notified in advance will be publicised on the County Council's website. If school is unable to contact the Children's Services prior to closure, we will do so as soon as practicable. **Agreement cannot normally be given in advance to closures of more than one day**.

### Closing for a Property Related Problem

When closure arises from a property-related problem, like a heating system failure, in addition to informing Children's Services, direct contact with a relevant member of staff in school (or failing this Operational Services Department) should be made to ensure that the problem can be resolved as soon as possible.

## TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS

If the school is closing the transport provider and the Integrated Transport Unit should be informed.

Where parents have brought their children into school when transport is not running, they need to be made aware that they will be responsible for getting them home again.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The SLG will review these procedures after **each** severe weather closure and amend policy in accordance with any needs.

### Premises Committee

Last updated June 2019

To be reviewed: June 2020