



Down Ampney C of E primary school Adverse Weather Policy

Signed by:





Headteacher

Chair of governors

25 February 2024

Date: _____

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of this policy is to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Down Ampney C of E Primary School intends to, wherever possible, make the decision to close the school before the teaching day commences, rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- Make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- Advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during cold weather: teachers and other educational professionals'
- UKHSA (2023) 'Adverse Weather and Health Plan'
- DfE (2023) 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- Emergency Plan

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether pupils should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment and materials.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

The school business manager is responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the headteacher of any damages.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the headteacher.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.
- Liaising with one another before the end of the day to discuss an exit plan for pupils, this includes escorting younger pupils to the entrance to be collected by their parents.

Parents are responsible for:

- Checking the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

3. School closure

The headteacher will sign the school up to receive [Weather-Health Alerts](#) from the UKHSA and Met Office. The school will make a local assessment and initiate all appropriate procedures in response to an alert. Alerts will be reviewed to ensure the school fully understands the potential impacts and how likely they are to occur.

The decision to close the school will be made by the headteacher and the site manager. The chair of governors will also be consulted when making a decision about school closure. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher will assume the responsibility of the headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- The headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message or telephone.
- The headteacher or ICT leader will post an update on the school website.
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Where the school is temporarily closed due to adverse weather, the headteacher will aim to ensure the school can provide remote education in line with the Remote Education Policy.

Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration

with the headteacher. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of pupils.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

National Severe Weather Warning Service

The Met Office is responsible for issuing [weather warnings](#), which warn of impacts caused by severe weather. These warnings are designed to let communities, emergency responders and governments know what weather is in store and what the impacts of that weather may be.

The Met Office issues weather warnings, through the National Severe Weather Warning Service, when severe weather has the potential to bring impacts to the UK. These warnings are given a colour (yellow, amber or red) depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring.

Yellow and Amber warnings represent a range of impact levels and likelihoods. This means it is important to read each warning to know what level of impact is expected for our warning area – and how likely those impacts are to occur.

Red Warning: Dangerous weather is expected and action is required to keep safe from the impact of the severe weather. It is very likely that there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. Persons should avoid travelling, where possible, and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

In the event of an Amber or Red warning being issued for our area it is most likely that the school will close. The headteacher will consider in consultation with the Chair of Governors if the school should stay open.

4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

When deciding whether the school will remain open, a risk assessment will be completed to inform the decision.

If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only.

All pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before pupils arrive on the premises.

At the headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.

5. Health and safety

The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff, visitors and parents have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds.

Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the Risk Assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the headteacher or school business manager of why they believe it to be unsafe so the risks can be reassessed.

In the event of adverse weather conditions, the headteacher will assess the school site as early as possible.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

Closing the school is a reasonable decision if pupils or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access. **NB: it is not the school's responsibility to clear and salt public access paths to the school.**

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during adverse cold weather, the school will:

- Ensure heating systems are maintained and in good working order, prioritising rooms being used where appropriate.
- Draught-proof windows, doors and other points of energy loss.
- Close rooms or buildings that are too cold to be used.
- Ventilate indoor spaces, especially where people gather, to help reduce the risk of infections spreading.
- Promote the flu vaccine for eligible staff and pupils, and encourage parents to keep their children up to date with routine immunisations.
- Reinforce messaging around the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Encourage physical activity where appropriate to help keep pupils warm.
- Provide information to parents and pupils on important logistical changes, e.g. disrupted bus routes, during severe weather.
- Ensure pupils have a sufficient supply of hot meals and snacks.
- Signpost parents to key sources of support, e.g. heating and other energy efficiency measures, during cold weather periods.

Relevant staff members will be trained and made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions. All staff will understand the school's Emergency Plan.

Where a pupil is suffering from heat exhaustion, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- Moving the pupil to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
- Cooling the pupil as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, and assisting cooling using a fan.
- Where the pupil does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called.
- If the pupil loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the pupil will continue until the ambulance arrives.

Where a pupil is suspected to be suffering from heatstroke, 999 will be called immediately and the pupil will be cooled down in line with the procedures for managing heat exhaustion outlined above whilst awaiting medical assistance.

Where a pupil loses consciousness or experiences a fit or seizure, they will be placed in the recovery position, 999 will be called immediately and staff will follow the operator's instructions.

6. Limited staff numbers

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, whether this means they will be late or not.

Staff members are expected to assess the availability of all public transport and consider the feasibility of walking to work, if they live relatively close and are fit and able to do so, in order to attend work.

The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

Staff members are required to consider local weather conditions, distance, availability of public transport and fitness to walk when making their decision.

Staff members are required to liaise with the headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

7. Attendance statistics

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

When a pupil cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the headteacher believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

Parents acting on the assumption that the school would be closed, without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevent the child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school will understand that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It will therefore be at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff. No maximum class size limits are set out; a limit of 30 pupils per class will apply if the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

8. Emergency plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the Emergency Action Plan.

Down Ampney C of E Primary Schools emergency plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parent contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.
- All nominated staff will be trained to:
 - Contact and liaise with emergency services.
 - Provide first aid.
 - Move pupils to a safe place.
 - Calm and comfort children.
 - Contact parents.
 - Deal with any media interest.
- Each member of staff will have a copy of the emergency plan.

Paper copies of the plan will be kept at nominated staff members' homes in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

All parents will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, e.g. their duty to collect children.

9. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the headteacher.