

Ormiston Academies Trust



Adverse Weather policy

Policy version control

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1. Introduction and Context

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

The purpose of this policy is to define the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions and to make clear the responsibilities of key people involved in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all full-time, part-time and supply staff, students, contractors, volunteers and work placement students and to all OAT academies.

3. Definitions

Adverse Weather: “Severe weather that causes unsafe conditions.”

Adverse Cold Weather: “Conditions such as flooding, heavy snow fall, extremely low temperatures leading to icy roads, pathways, etc.”

Adverse Hot Weather: “Conditions such as excessive sun exposure or extremely high temperatures, which may cause sunburn, sun-stroke, heat exhaustion, etc.”

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal has the overall responsibility to ensure that hazards are identified, risks are assessed and that suitable and sufficient control measures are implemented to reduce the risks as low as is reasonably practicable. This includes ensuring that sufficient time and resources are allocated to enable this to happen.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Facilities/Site Manager

The Facilities/Site Manager will ensure that:

- The school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment, including protective equipment and shovels.
- The school has an adequate supply of rock salt or other gritting/de-icing material, including a reserve.
- Specific ‘gritting/clearing’ areas are identified and prioritised.
- Records are kept of locations and frequency of the gritting/clearing carried out.

4.3 Responsibilities of all Staff, students and visitors

All staff, students and visitors must ensure that:

- They wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather conditions, such as gloves, scarves, or sun-hats during periods of adverse weather.
- They express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds.
- They take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.
- They inform one of the site management team if they feel that the measures taken have not reduced the risk to an acceptable level.

4.4 Responsibilities of Parents

Parents must ensure that:

- Their child(ren) is sent to school wearing the appropriate clothing for the weather conditions
- Sunscreen is provided in a bottle labelled with their child(ren)'s name when required
- Their contact information is kept up-to-date and any changes are reported immediately.
- During handover periods, their child(ren) do not enter unsafe areas.

4.5 Responsibilities of the OAT Health and Safety Officer (H&SO)

The Health and Safety Officer will:

- Assist with the completion of an Adverse Weather Risk Assessment, where required
- Provide advice and guidance, where required.

5. Procedure

Wherever possible, the decision to close the school should be made before the teaching day commences, rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school.

The Facilities/Site manager will assess the school site and inform the Principal of the state of site. A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

Specific Procedure for the emergency closure of Sandymoor Ormiston Academy

How we will communicate with you:

- The academy will always aim to remain open and will only close if the site is unsafe.
- If we need to close, the decision will be posted on our academy website, via our Twitter account and via our Facebook page by 7.30am and a text message to parents and carers will follow these announcements via Parentmail.
- The academy will notify the Halton Local Authority

If we need to close during the academy day:

- If we ever need to close the academy part-way through the day, we will text/email all families immediately. We will also display a notice on our website and use Twitter and Facebook feeds to communicate the message. Please ensure that you keep your contact details up to date so you don't miss these important messages

- If we need to close, we will make sure students let us know their arrangements for getting home safely. We will also encourage students to contact you directly in order to get home safely, if they have the means to do so.
- Any child who cannot immediately get home will remain in the academy and will be looked after until they can be collected.
- We will take messages from you, however, please be patient, persistent and realistic. We ask parents and carers to avoid ringing us, wherever possible, before we have made the decision to close the academy.

Parents and Carers' Responsibilities:

Parents must make the best decision for their child/ren based on their own assessment of the risk to travel to and from the academy. If you find yourself unable to get your child to the academy, please contact us in the usual way for reporting absence.

During and after closure:

Students can access their Microsoft Teams accounts to complete homework and other tasks in the event of the academy closing. It would be advisable for Year 11 and 10 to check their email accounts in case their teachers wish to communicate with them regarding appropriate work.

It is unlikely the academy will announce a second closure for the following day in advance, so parents and carers should check the academy website/Twitter/Facebook for further information.

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

6. Related documents

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

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)

This policy also has due regard to school documents including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Adverse Weather Procedure
- Guidance – Adverse Weather
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- Guidance – Risk Assessment
- Risk Assessment standard form template

7. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years by Head Office, any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.