



## ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS POLICY

In conditions of severe weather schools and other settings are sometimes unable to operate normally, and it might be necessary to close the school to children/students. When severe weather is forecast the Trust will consult with parents on their preferred options in respect of possible closure (an example letter is at Appendix 1). Should the decision be made to close an academy in the Trust parents and staff will be notified by text message.

### **THE DECISION TO CLOSE AN ACADEMY WITHIN THE TRUST**

A decision to close is an emergency closure and will only be taken if it is not practicable or safe to open the school or keep the school open. This can be because of snow/ice which makes travelling to the school difficult or impossible, or if the school site is not safe for students/children and staff. A partial closure might be an alternative to full closure where it is possible to safely accommodate some of the students/children.

The decision to close an academy within the Trust is one for the Headteachers (or his/her deputy in their absence), on the basis of the actual or expected situation in their area and other relevant factors.

### **IS IT REASONABLE TO EXPECT STAFF AND STUDENTS/CHILDREN TO BE ABLE TO GET INTO SCHOOL?**

Very few students attending academies within the Trust rely on transport provided by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to attend school, however, in the case of a closure the Admin Manager will contact LCC transport and transport providers.

In respect of teachers and other school/children's services staff, the Department for Education has said that time spent travelling to and from school is an "essential journey". If a school is open and staff are able to make the journey, then they are asked to do so.

Consideration will be given to the changing weather situation as the day progresses.

### **ARE THERE SUFFICIENT STAFF MEMBERS TO SUPERVISE THE CHILDREN ON THE PREMISES?**

The children must be adequately supervised whilst on the premises and any unsafe areas will be closed off.

The existence of snow/ice does not absolve the school of its normal health and safety responsibilities.

## **IS THE SCHOOL SITE SAFE?**

It is the areas that are to be used that need to be reasonably safe and under supervision. This need not be the entire site.

## **CAN THE STUDENTS/CHILDREN GET HOME SAFELY?**

If transport is being provided by LCC, it may be that the home run is brought forward by the transport providers if worse weather is expected. In that case, the provider will notify us. The Trust will be responsible for ensuring that students/children return home safely.

## **WHEN TO MAKE A DECISION**

The decision will be taken at the earliest moment if it is decided that the school should close, and preferably before the journey to school begins, the decision is notified as below;

A decision made to close during the school day after the school day has begun places an obligation on the Headteachers to ensure that pupils will be able to get home safely, either under parental supervision or with county transport help.

## **HOW CLOSURES ARE NOTIFIED**

A text message will be sent to parents, staff, transport operators, the local media and others signed up to the system. The system will also be used to notify the re-opening of the school.

EXAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS IN RESPECT OF ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Dear Parent/Carer

The West Grantham Academies Trust sets great store by regular attendance at school. This proves to be more difficult in very bad weather when it is harder to get children to school. I am writing to ask your opinion about what should happen in the event of snow.

We take health and safety very seriously, and recognise that if a child is at school our responsibility is to take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.

So,

In the event of very bad weather, when snow makes such obligations difficult, we could:

- a) simply close the academies to ensure we do not put children and staff at risk – age appropriate work will be available on the VLE or from workbooks (if closure is pre-planned)
- b) put all premises staff to the task of clearing one site and opening one academy only - all staff and students attending that one site for the day (in this case it would be St Hugh's)
- c) open one primary and one secondary site with very restricted movement around sites for children and staff
- d) try to keep each site open with the inevitable reduction in staffing and possible last minute closure if numbers make that decision essential (some staff travel from as far afield as Boston for example).

In each case information would be sent to you via text message. Please make sure we have current contact details so we do not miss you out.

On a day when a decision may have to be made about closure due to bad weather, breakfast club on any site would be closed – again, a text message will let you know of this.

Before making your choice, please bear in mind the implications for you of travelling to another site to drop off your child, and also the less structured day which would result in children attending a different site, set against the obvious greater risk of the individual academies closing if we do not pool resources.

None of us are looking forward to this almost inevitable disruption, but I feel it better to air the options beforehand, so that we can take your views into consideration when we arrive at a decision.

Of course, the weather may be so severe that closure is inevitable - let's hope the forecasters are wrong.

Yours sincerely

Please complete and return:

Name of student: ..... Class: .....

In the event of very bad weather my preference would be to:

- a) simply close the academies to ensure we do not put children and staff at risk.

My child will /will not be able to access VLE via website

- b) put all premises staff to the task of clearing one site and opening one academy only - all staff and students attending that one site for the day (in this case it would be St Hugh's)
- c) open one primary and one secondary site with very restricted movement around sites for children a
- d) try to keep each site open with the inevitable reduction in staffing and possible last minute closure if numbers make that decision essential

Additional comments:

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