

# COGNITA



**DOWNSEND**  
SCHOOL

## **Adverse Weather and Procedures Policy**

**September 2021**

**UK**

### 1. General Statement of Intent

#### 1.1. The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, whenever practically possible, providing this can be done in a safe manner that does not affect the users of the school.
- Ensure that the decision to close the school is understood by and communicated to pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Keep to a minimum the amount of time the school is closed during adverse conditions.

### 2. Reasons for Closure

#### 2.1. It may be necessary to close the school during extreme weather conditions for a variety of reasons including:

- Conditions on the site (school site, site entrances, on site roadways and the car park) are considered unsafe for the users (pupils staff, visitors and parents)
- Insufficient staff arrive at work for the school to operate safely
- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms
- Accommodation and utility problems for example loss of power supply, heating failures
- Advice from Police or Fire Authorities

### 3. Decision to Close

#### 3.1. The decision to close the school before or during the school day will rest with the Head or in their absence the Deputy Head, in consultation with the Site team.

#### 3.2. The decision to close will be made where possible by 7.15am, on the basis of information from:

- Media about the weather, condition of local roads, paths and public transport
- Met Office
- Local Authority

#### 3.3. The final decision as to whether the school proposed closure will be made in conjunction with Cognita Senior Management referring to escalation procedures.

#### 3.4. The school will inform Ofsted of the closure and when the school is open again - via telephone 0300 123 1231 or via email [enquires@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquires@ofsted.gov.uk).

### 4. Alternatives to Closure

#### 4.1. It is sometimes appropriate to amend the opening hours of the school rather than close the school, eg opening later in the day or shortening the day. This should always be considered as an alternative to closure.

### 5. Notification of school closure before a school day

#### 5.1. If a decision to close has been made before the school day, announcements will be made via:

- School website
- Message on school answerphone/main switchboard
- Email announcement and message sent via Cognita Connect to parent's mobile phone
- Local radio announcements
- Notice on the school entrance gates

### 6. Notification of school closure during a school day

- 6.1. In exceptional circumstances, the school may unfortunately have to close during a school day when the weather deteriorates and there is doubt as to whether pupils can be returned home later in the day.
- 6.2. The school will use the school comms texting service to contact parents/carers, and uses the school website to inform of early closure.
- 6.3. Pupils who have no access to home will remain in school and arrangements will be made to ensure the safety and security of these pupils with the school until either collected or until parents contact the school with alternative arrangements.
- 6.4. If the weather deteriorates during the day, parents themselves may wish to collect pupils earlier than the official end of the school day. Parents must notify the school office number of their intention to collect a pupil, and report to the School Office on arrival.

### 7. Staff Attendance

- 7.1. It is recognised that severe weather conditions can make it difficult for some staff to get to and from the school; however the expectation is that staff will make every effort to present themselves at school unless advised to the contrary by the Head.
- 7.2. If staff are unable to get in, they are expected to complete administrative tasks, and set pupil work as required, during the working day.

### 8. Clearance of Snow

- 8.1. The Site team will be tasked to lay salt and grit on arrival to ensure that the car parks, driveways and pathways are safe.
- 8.2. If the risk to pupils and staff safety around the school site is increased during a day then they will be restricted to indoors areas. At the Heads discretion the playground/school grounds may be out of bounds at the beginning, break times and end of the school day.
- 8.3. Pedestrians to the school site are advised to stay on the pathways which, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted. The on-site roadways and school car park will be cleared of snow or gritted.
- 8.4. The school Incident and Continuity Planning Toolkit includes all emergency details needed to cover this type of business interruption in the running of the school.
- 8.5. The Head must ensure a Risk Assessment is in place in advance which covers the hazards associated with snow and ice on their premises.
- 8.6. The site team may attend the school over the closure period and a weekend where required to ensure any potential frozen pipes have not burst resulting in flooding.

### 9. School Transportation

- 9.1. The school will ensure that all bus and minibus services will be informed of the decision to close and we will endeavour to reschedule transport services.
- 9.2. The school will consider whether it is safe to carry out the whole route or part of the route with the driver and if the decision is made to cancel or alter a route, the parents/carers will be informed.

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- 9.3. The external transport provider would need to consider whether it is safe to carry out the whole route or part of the route. If a decision is made to cancel or alter a route, the coach company informs the school, who will then inform the parents/carers.
- 9.4. For those travelling by public bus or train, then parents/carers are advised to contact the local bus operator direct via their website or the National Rail Enquires to find out if services are running.

### 10. Public Examinations

- 10.1. In the event that there is extreme weather during a public examination period, the exam session will go ahead if there are sufficient members of staff/Invigilators present, to comply with the regulations set by the examination boards.
- 10.2. If the school has suffered a power or heating failure and/or the conditions are such that an attempt to get into school jeopardises the health and safety of the pupils and staff the exam session will not go ahead and the School will contact the appropriate examination board.
- 10.3. The school will endeavour to contact all affected pupils in the event of a cancellation of a public examination, and the school website will be maintained with all emergency closure details or alternative arrangements. Any pupils unable to attend an exam session due to adverse weather conditions **must** contact the school at the earliest opportunity to inform them of the absence.

### 11. Setting Work for Pupils

- 11.1. The school will set work accordingly due to the closure of the school or inability of large numbers of pupils to attend due to the adverse weather conditions. This will be communicated electronically.
- 11.2. In the unlikely event that staff are unable to set work, age appropriate learning resources will be available to access via the VLE.
- 11.3. Where the closure of the school is likely to be prolonged, appropriate work will be set for all pupils in the school. This will be communicated via the school website/school comms.

### 12. Continued Closure

- 12.1. The decision for the school to remain closed will be reviewed by the Head on a daily basis, agreed and communicated as advised above.

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<b>Ownership and consultation</b>	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Transformation and Operations
Document author (name)	Head of Compliance Europe
Specialist Legal Advice	
Consultation	

<b>Compliance</b>	
Compliance with	Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014

<b>Audience</b>	
Audience	Heads, H&S Co-ordinators

<b>Document application</b>	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	No
Switzerland	No

<b>Version control</b>	
Implementation date	June 2018
Review date	June 2022

<b>Related documentation</b>	
Related documentation	Health and Safety Policy Critical Incident Management Plan Lone Working Policy