



Adverse Weather Policy

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Adopted by:	Resource Committee
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Lead	Estates Manager

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Statement of intent

Extol Trust recognises that the number of occasions when our schools decide to close due to severe weather (normally snow) is very low. However, the impact of such closures on parents, carers and the rest of the school community, even if infrequent, is not to be under-estimated.

Accordingly, it is important for all schools to take what steps they can to remain open, whilst recognising that there will be occasions when particular circumstances make closure the only option.

It is the aim of Extol Trust to ensure that our schools remain open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

All of our schools will, 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 & School policies and procedures

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 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 Trust policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Emergency Plan

And school policies and procedures:

- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Remote Education Policy

2. Decision to close

2.1 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.

2.2 The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher, following the completion of a full risk assessment. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply.

- Inadequate ratio of staff to pupils due to staff being unable to get into workplace
- Heating failure meaning that the school can't be heated to an acceptable level
- Conditions around school being too severe despite safety measures being put in place

2.3 The SBM and the Chair of Governors will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

2.4 In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

2.5 The CEO will be informed of the decision to close the school and will be sent the completed risk assessment (*Ref: Appendix 1*)

2.6 In the event of school closure:

- The Headteacher will inform staff and parents via their usual form of electronic communication.
- The Headteacher or SBM will post the letter (*Ref: Appendix 2*) on their school website.
- The Headteacher will inform the LA. Registering school closures with the LA has the advantage that key agencies are automatically alerted. These include radio stations, the Schools' Transport Team and School Crossing Patrol. (*Ref: Appendix 3 Key Contacts*)
- The SBM will ensure all outside agencies effected by closure are notified; e.g. school meals, cleaning services etc.
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.
- The Headteacher or SBM will call the local radio station. It is noted that parents will have previously been made aware that announcements concerning the school will be broadcasted via the local radio station.

2.7 In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via Class Dojo, Teachers to Parents App or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school. Springwell School will request The LA Transport Team to take children home early so that parents do not need to collect their children from school.

3. In the event of heavy snowfall during the school day

3.1 If there is heavy snowfall during the school day the Headteacher will decide whether it is necessary to close the school and inform the Chair of the Local Governing Body and the CEO.

3.2 The School Office will contact parents and ask that they pick their child/children up from school as soon as possible. Springwell School will request The LA Transport Team to take children home early so that parents do not need to collect their children from school.

3.3 The Staff that live furthest from the school will be permitted to leave at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 A skeleton staff will remain in school until all of the children have been collected.

3.5 If a parent rings requesting they pick their child up early due to the weather, and the decision has not been made to close the school, these requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher.

4. Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

4.1 When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment. (*Ref: Appendix 1*)

4.2 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.

- 4.3 The site manager will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.
- 4.4 All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted.
- 4.5 A notice will be erected to inform that vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds do so at their own risk.
- 4.6 At the Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents.
- 4.7 All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

5. Health and safety

- 5.1 The school has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.
- 5.2 The school will be liable if it is found that the school has been negligent in its responsibilities and has not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.
- 5.3 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.
- 5.6 If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the headteacher or site manager so the safety can be reassessed.
- 5.7 In the event of adverse weather conditions, the site manager will assess the school site and inform the Headteacher at 7.00am of the state of site.
- 5.8 A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.
- 5.9 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.

6. Limited staff numbers

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

6.3 The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk.

6.4 In line with 6.3, it is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

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

6.6 Staff members are required to liaise with the Headteacher to discuss options of attending work.

6.7 In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together in mainstream schools 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.

6.8 The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances and will utilise their Remote Learning Policy where necessary.

7. Attendance statistics

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

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 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.

8. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and reported to the CEO, and any necessary amendments will be made during review by the Trust.

The policy will be reviewed biennially.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT DETAILS		RISK MATRIX & RATING													
Title of risk assessment	Snow and Ice	POTENTIAL OUTCOME			LIKELIHOOD										
Details of activity:		Catastrophic	Fatal injury/permanent disability		Highly	More likely									
		Major	RIDDOR reportable Specified Injury/ Disease/Dangerous Occurrence		Likely										
		Moderate	RIDDOR reportable over 7 day injury		Possible										
		Minor	Minor injury (requiring first aid)		Unlikely										
		Insignificant	Minor injury		Remote	Less likely									
Location of activity	Whole School Site	POTENTIAL OUTCOME													
Risk assessment log ref		Catastrophic													
Other risk assessments cross-referenced	Lone Working / Working at Heights / Manual Handling Health and Safety Policy	Major													
Workplace Instruction reference		Moderate													
Date of assessment		Minor													
Name of person carrying out assessment		Insignificant													
Person carrying out assessment's signature			Remote	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Highly Likely								
Name of employee(s) consulted on activity		LIKELIHOOD													
Employee Signature		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: left;">Risk rating</th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="background-color: red;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"> HIGH Urgently review/add controls & monitor, notify H&S Team (if Likely or Highly Likely – stop work, seek competent advice) </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"> MEDIUM Review / add controls (as far as reasonably practicable) & monitor </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: green;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"> LOW Monitor control measures </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Risk rating	Action		HIGH Urgently review/add controls & monitor, notify H&S Team (if Likely or Highly Likely – stop work, seek competent advice)		MEDIUM Review / add controls (as far as reasonably practicable) & monitor		LOW Monitor control measures
Risk rating	Action														
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	MEDIUM Review / add controls (as far as reasonably practicable) & monitor														
	LOW Monitor control measures														
Headteacher Signature	Date														

Hazard and related activity <i>E.g. slip – wet floor</i>	Persons at risk <i>E.g. employees, pupils, customers, contractors, members of public (include out of hours use)</i>	Existing control measures <i>E.g. workplace instructions, training, authorised user, competent person, PPE – give specific references</i>	Risk rating after existing control measures <i>Potential Outcome x Likelihood = Risk (eg Minor x Unlikely = Low)</i> <i>If High, and no additional controls practicable, notify H&S Team</i>	If any additional control measures required – what are they? <i>E.g. documented observational monitoring</i>	Residual risk rating after additional control measures <i>Potential Outcome x Likelihood = Risk (e.g. Minor x Unlikely = Low)</i> <i>If High notify H&S Team</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slips, trips and falls from walking on ice/snow on school grounds 	Employees, pupils, visitors, parents/carers, contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual inspection of premises carried out daily by the Site Supervisor as part of daily grounds check routine. Winter Plan in place. Suitable ice and snow clearing and gritting equipment provided. Stocks of suitable rock salt/grit are adequate and kept refilled. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing provided to personnel clearing snow and ice. Routes and areas prioritised for clearing and gritting as per the snow and ice clearing plan. Clearing of paths/zones to be a minimum of 1 metre wide (1.5m if possible). Particular attention will be given to sloping areas or steps. Any areas or zones that cannot be cleared for any reason will be closed off with cones, signs and tape and alternative routes provided. Pupils, parents/carers and staff to be advised of all zone clearing areas and of any areas/zone closures. Site Supervisor to regularly review zones throughout the day to check for any re-gritting required. All staff to have access to the Snow and Ice Risk Assessment. Play areas will be closed and play equipment be made out of use if they present an unacceptable risk. Pupils will be accommodated during break times indoors. 	Medium		Medium

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the play areas are deemed acceptable for play, only pupils wearing appropriate clothing and footwear will be allowed outside. • Fire drills will not take place during icy and snow conditions. • Accidents, minor injuries or near misses relating to ice and snow conditions are recorded, monitored and reported to the appropriate personnel. • Staff and pupils will be reminded of the school rules about sensible behaviour. Pupils will not be permitted to run/slide etc. • Site Supervisor to ensure that all adequate matting is in place and that any wet floors/corridors are immediately marked (signage in place) and cleaned. All staff should also be vigilant for such situations and inform the Site Supervisor or School Business Manager of any wet flooring. • Staff and visitors to be encouraged to use the appropriate matting to wipe their wet footwear before entering the building. • Staff, parents, pupils and visitors should be encouraged to use the designated cleared pathways and access routes. • Any persons at risk with physical disabilities should be assisted to ensure their safe access and egress to and from the premises. 			
• Manual Handling	Site Supervisor (or other designated member(s) of staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the provided spreading equipment to spread/dispense the rock salt / grit. • Only staff trained in manual handling should carry out ice and snow clearing activities. • All appropriate clothing and PPE should be worn. • Staff should avoid manual gritting and shovelling snow wherever possible. However, where salt/grit has to be moved and dispensed without the use of a spreader, staff should follow a good manual handling technique. • Alternate tasks to allow rest breaks from continuous manual handling activities. • Begin snow and ice clearance as early as possible to allow sufficient time for clearance of site. • Pregnant employees and staff with specific medical conditions will not be expected to carry out snow and ice clearing duties. 	Low		Low
• Extreme temperatures	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate clothing will be worn by those involved in snow and ice clearing / gritting. • Regular breaks to be taken. 	Low		Low
• Poor lighting	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access routes used during ice and snow clearance are well lit and where necessary, additional task lighting be provided for gritting duties in poorly lit areas. 	Low		Low

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gritting (hand irritation, grit in the eyes) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where grit can be flung (from a machine) at eye level, safety glasses or goggles should be worn by staff involved in such operations. Mechanical spreading which presents this risk should be carried out at times when pupils and others are not in the area. Appropriate PPE (gloves) should be worn when handling salt/grit. 	Low		Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone Working 	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone Working Risk Assessment in place and to be followed as required by all staff. Site Supervisor or other supporting staff to carry a radio or mobile telephone during snow/ice clearing activities. Notify the office or HT of the expected duration of task. Minimise the duration of time spent alone carrying out this task. Inform the office, HT, SBM of location and expected duration of task(s). 	Low		Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at Heights 	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The employee is prohibited from working at any height or using any form of steps, raised equipment during snow or icy conditions. 	Low		Low

ACTION PLAN (insert additional rows if required)		To be actioned by:			Action completed:		
Further control measures to reduce risks <i>so far as is reasonably practicable</i>		Name	Position	Date	Signature	Date	
1							
2							
3							
4							

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

Use this section to record how the risk assessment & control measures have been communicated, and any other comments and information

All staff have access to this risk assessment. All staff are also aware that they must communicate any concerns regarding the grounds safety to the appropriate member of staff (Headteacher/Site Supervisor/School Business Manager).

<p>Scheduled date of next review</p> <p><i>Minimum annually, or if there are any significant changes, or following an incident or near miss</i></p>	<p>Are there any changes to the activity since the last review?</p> <p><i>Clarify that all the controls are still in place and are monitored on a regular basis.</i></p>	<p>Signature of manager</p>	<p>Date of review</p>

Appendix 2: Communication to parents/carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

Closure of school due to severe weather on [insert date]

During severe weather conditions, we make every effort to keep the school open for as many children as possible. However, in some circumstances, following completion of a risk assessment, we may decide that it is necessary to temporarily close the school. Reasons may include:

- Conditions around school being too severe despite safety measures being put in place
- Inadequate ratio of staff to pupils due to staff being unable to get in
- Heating failure meaning that the school can't be heated to an acceptable level

In such circumstances we will always attempt to give parents and carers advance notice, but due to the unpredictable nature of some weather events this may not always be possible.

On *[insert date]*, following consultation with our local governing board and completion of the risk assessment, I regrettably had to take the decision to close the school. This was due to *[insert reason as applicable]*.

As per our Adverse Weather Policy, we communicated information about the closure before *[insert time, e.g. 8.30am]* via *[insert method(s), e.g. our school website, the local authority's website, radio station]*.

If you are not yet signed up to receive electronic messages from the school, and would like to access this service in future, please *[insert details of process, e.g. contact the school office]*. Please also let us know if your contact details have changed.

If you would like to read our Adverse Weather Policy, you can find it on our school website through the following link *[insert link]*.

I'd like to thank you all for your patience and understanding. Decisions to close the school are never taken lightly, but unfortunately may sometimes be necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the school community.

[Insert sign off]

Appendix 3: Key Contacts

Hartlepool	<p>LA Emergency Contact 01429 266522</p> <p>Media Radio Hartlepool - 01429 275222 TFM Radio - 01642 888222 BBC Radio Tees - 01642 225211</p>
Middlesbrough	<p>schoolclosure@middlesbrough.gov.uk</p> <p>Media TFM Radio - 01642 888222 BBC Radio Tees - 01642 225211</p>
Stockton	<p>LA Emergency Contact – Tell Us Once Carly Machin 01642 527309</p> <p>Media TFM Radio - 01642 888222 BBC Radio Tees - 01642 225211</p>
Sunderland	<p>Executive Director of People’s Services Representatives: Alan Rowan Office 0191 561 1372 Mobile 07917504203</p> <p>John Walvin Office 0191 5611376</p> <p>Media: Metro 0191 279 0228 BBC Radio Newcastle 0191 232 6565 Sunderland FM 0191 548 1034</p>