



## Severe Weather Conditions Policy

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“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

## 1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all settings and business units within Nexus MAT. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's business continuity plan.
- 1.2 It also applies to all temporary workers, consultants and/or contractors acting on behalf of an Academy

## 2. Context

- 2.1 Nexus Trust is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment and to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff and pupils. In doing so, we will ensure that any disruption to the normal functioning of the trust will remain minimal, whilst not compromising the safety and well-being of all who enter the premises.

## 3. Aims

- 3.1 To outline the procedures for the closure of our Trust sites as well as informing staff and pupils should the situation require the cancellation of all classes.
- 3.2 Circumstances may not dictate a complete closure. For example, a power failure or flood in one area which may result in a partial closure, whereas severe weather may close the entire Trust.
- 3.3 A closure is a very unlikely event and unless staff and pupils receive official notification of a closure, they are expected to attend as normal.
- 3.4 A complete closure will only occur when there is severe disruption to the site where, for reasons of health and safety, it would not be possible to continue normal operations.

## 4. Statutory Position

- 4.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 puts a duty on business to ensure, as much as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999 provides further details for how schools should assess the risks to the health and safety of employees and students.

## 5. Criteria to be considered for a closure

- 5.1 A risk assessment will be conducted by an academy Headteacher taking into account a range of factors including:
  - 5.1.1 Can parents, pupils and staff access the site safely?
  - 5.1.2 Are pedestrian routes in to the site safe and accessible?
  - 5.1.3 Can learners and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
  - 5.1.4 In an emergency, can the Emergency Services access the site?
  - 5.1.5 Have local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those for areas from which staff will be travelling, been considered?
  - 5.1.6 Are there any Met Office warnings available?
  - 5.1.7 Can the premises be heated?
  - 5.1.8 Is there provision of water for sanitary use or drinking?
  - 5.1.9 Can enough staff attend the Academy to ensure the adequate supervision of pupils?
  - 5.1.10 Is the weather or incident likely to clear within a short period of time?

## 6. Decision to close

- 6.1 Any decision on closure will be made by the individual Headteacher in line with the Trust's Business Continuity Plan.
- 6.2 Headteachers will endeavour to make a decision at the earliest possible time. If the closure is during the day, members of the Senior Leadership Team should ensure they have an accurate list of contact telephone numbers so that they can cascade any notifications to parents.

- 6.3 If a situation occurs overnight, a decision will be made as early as possible or by 07:00 hours which will be communicated by each school in the most direct way possible.

## 7. Protocol for Academy Closures

- 7.1 Please see attached protocol (Appendix 1) which outlines the stages each Academy will follow given the approval to close.

## 8. Staff Attendance

- 8.1 Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Headteacher, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work. Where a staff member does not attend without prior notification to the Headteacher, this will be considered as either unauthorised absence.
- 8.2 Consideration will be given to domestic circumstances, travel arrangements and the safety of staff. Contract and agency staff, if appropriate, also need to be advised of any emergency requirements.
- 8.3 It is recommended that a decision to close the Academy is made as early as possible, in order to inform parents/carers. Once the decision to close the Academy has been taken, this needs to be communicated quickly and efficiently to the Academy community i.e. staff, transport providers, parents/carers and pupils.

## 9. Accountability

- 9.1 Academy Headteachers hold delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of this policy, in conjunction with their delegated responsibilities and the measures outlined in the MAT's business continuity plan.
- 9.2 Academy Headteachers should inform the CEO of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be

addressed under this code of conduct promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

## Appendix 1

# Academy Closure Protocol Due To Severe Weather Conditions

It is the policy of Nexus MAT to ensure that our academies make every effort to remain open whenever possible, regardless of the weather. A decision to close an academy during the school day will be made by the Headteacher and will generally only be made if it is felt that this is the best way to ensure that pupils can return home safely.

Emergency closure will only occur in exceptional circumstance:

- Where there is a loss of essential services to the academy which cannot be reasonably compensated by alternative provision;
- Where there are severe weather conditions adversely affect access to the academy.

Academies will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon families. However, families are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

During bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact their academy to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

All parents and staff will be sent a message advising of the closure, to the mobile number provided on their school record. It is therefore important that a family notify the academy office whenever their phone number changes.

Should a parent not be able to be contacted or a pupil cannot be picked up by parent/carer, additional contacts provided by parents for collection purposes throughout the year will be used as the next means of communication.

Parents are requested not to contact the academy to enquire about closure as this will block the telephone lines which may be needed.

All pupils must be aware of what arrangements are likely to put in place in the event of closing due to bad weather. We would need as many parents as possible to collect their children personally since public transport and travel in general may be disrupted in the event of serious bad weather.

Where we believe there are likely to be problems with driving conditions and public transport, we will use local radio stations to convey the news as widely as possible, assuming that we are able to get through to them. Information will also be sent to parents using text messaging systems and Academy websites, and social media platforms will also carry information.

The Headteacher will ensure that there is adequate staffing in place until all pupils have been safely collected. The Headteacher will determine this at the time as this will be dependent on pupil numbers and weather conditions at that time.

A decision not to open the academy will usually be made by 07:00 hours. Information will be sent to parents using text messaging systems and our website and social media platforms will also carry information.

The website will be the most important method of informing parents of the current situation. There will be a clear message on the front page to inform you if the school will be closed. Use will be made of local radio stations, although it is not guaranteed that the school will manage to get through

You should presume the academy is open if there are no announcements via the above method.