Adverse Weather Policy v3

Strive for Education

Approved by:	Andy Brown	**Creation Date:**	Sep 22
Last reviewed on:	Sept 23, Sept 24, Nov 26	**Next review date:**	Nov 27
Location:	SharePoint: Staff Area > Staff Information > Policies Website: https://striveforeducation.co.uk/policies/		

Changes since last review:

School Bus update June 2024 New and updated information in this policy is highlighted in **[blue filled and bold text].**

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of Strive for Education (Strive) to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

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

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 during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals'
- 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 school policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- Emergency Plan
- Exam Contingency Plan

2. [Updated] Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close due to adverse weather.
- Informing parents and staff of any closure.
- Deciding whether students should be kept indoors during break times and reporting this decision to staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked with snow clearing equipment.
- Ensuring the school has an adequate supply of rock salt.
- **[Updated]** Reviewing this policy annually.
- Ensuring classroom temperatures are maintained at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that staff model good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Ensuring that staff understand the precautions for students in terms of sun safety.

- Ensuring staff have received appropriate training and guidance on the stipulations in this policy, and ensuring staff act in accordance with this policy.

[Updated] Site Team

- Completing a risk assessment that covers adverse weather and gritting.
- **[Updated]** Ensuring gritting is carried out in line with the procedures outlined in this policy
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained and stored properly

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the Headteacher.
- The safety of students, colleagues and themselves.
- Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing during periods of adverse weather.
- Liaising with one another before the end of the day to discuss an exit plan for students
- Modelling good practice in terms of sun safety.
- Encouraging students to stay appropriate hydrated.

Parents / Carers are responsible for:

- Only using the designated and cleared areas whilst on the school premises.
- **[Updated]** Collecting their children when the school needs to close or arrange transportation as applicable.
- Keeping all their contact information up-to-date.
- Ensuring they and their children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing for adverse weather.

Students are responsible for:

- Following the instructions and guidance of staff during adverse weather.
- Attending school prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Following the Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy at all times.

3. **[Updated]** School closure

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.

[Updated] The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to operate safely

In the event of school closure:

- The Headteacher will inform staff and parents via text message or telephone.
- The Headteacher or Operations Director will post an update on the school website and social media channels.
- **[Updated]** The Centre Leads at each site will post 'closure' signs on the school's door.
- **[Updated]** The Centre Leads at each site will ensure that Local Authority transport is made aware of the school closure.

In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents will be contacted via text message or telephone, using the numbers provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their child from the school as soon as possible.

Where the school is temporarily closed due to adverse weather, the headteacher will aim to ensure the school can provide remote education in line with the Remote Education Policy.

Staff who are likely to face particular difficulties in getting home may have to leave work early, taking into account their personal safety. This decision will be taken in collaboration with the Headteacher. Minimum cover arrangements in school will be provided by employees who do not have a particularly long or difficult journey home to ensure staffing ratios are maintained for the safety of students.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

4. [Updated] Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

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 and all pathways, wherever practical, will have been cleared and gritted before students arrive on the premises.

[Updated] The Centre Leads at each site with the support of the site team, will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site, if there are any, and a notice will be erected to inform pedestrians entering the school grounds that they do so at their own risk.

All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

5. [Updated] Procedures for gritting

Gritting will be prioritised to those areas which are most used by students and staff, this includes the main entrance of the school. The second phase of gritting will include areas that are likely to be used such as the rear of the property.

The Headteacher decides which areas of the school are prioritised for gritting and will ensure that the correct areas have been gritted and are safe for students and staff. Any areas that have not been cleared or gritted are clearly marked or cordoned off, so that students so not enter them.

The supply of rock salt is monitored – if supplies are low, the Headteacher is notified.

[Updated] A record is made of the areas that have been gritted, along with the frequency of gritting. This record is maintained by the site team.

6. [Updated] Health and safety

The school will recognise its duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds. The school will be liable if it is found to have been negligent in its responsibilities and not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, visitors and parents entering the school site.

[Updated] The Proprietors are responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

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. Staff members must take responsibility for the health and safety of any students under their supervision.

If anyone believes that the site is unsafe after the appropriate risk assessment has been completed, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds and inform either the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher so the site can be reassessed.

A risk assessment of the site will be conducted by the Headteacher in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions at 7.00am.

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

The school is committed to ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of students. To minimise the risk of ill health during adverse temperatures, the school will:

- Encourage staff and students to keep as much of their skin as possible covered up during the Summer months and wearing appropriate clothing during the Winter months.
- Encourage staff and students to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) 15 with UVA protection on any part of the body that they cannot cover up during the Summer months.

- Encourage staff and students to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Reschedule work/outdoor lessons according to the outdoor temperature.
- Ensure adequate water breaks and rest areas in the shade during hot temperatures.
- Encourage staff and students to carry an inhaler at all times if needed.
- Encourage staff and students to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Encourage staff and students to stay hydrated.

To help protect staff, pupils and visitors during adverse cold weather, the school will:

- Ensure heating systems are maintained and in good working order, prioritising rooms being used where appropriate.
- Draught-proof windows, doors and other points of energy loss.
- Close rooms or buildings that are too cold to be used.
- Ventilate indoor spaces, especially where people gather, to help reduce the risk of infections spreading.
- Promote the flu vaccine for eligible staff and pupils, and encourage parents to keep their children up to date with routine immunisations.
- Reinforce messaging around the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Encourage physical activity where appropriate to help keep pupils warm.
- Provide information to parents and pupils on important logistical changes, e.g. disrupted bus routes, during severe weather.
- Ensure pupils have a sufficient supply of hot meals and snacks.
- Signpost parents to key sources of support, e.g. heating and other energy efficiency measures, during cold weather periods.

Relevant staff members will be trained and made aware of how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering from ill health due to adverse weather conditions. All staff will understand the school's Emergency Plan.

Where a student is suffering from heat exhaustion, the following steps will be taken immediately:

    - Moving the student to as cool a room as possible and encouraging them to drink cold water
    - Cooling the pupil as rapidly as possibly, using whatever methods possible, e.g. sponging or spraying the pupil with cool water, placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, wrapping the pupil in a cool, wet sheet, and assisting cooling using a fan.
    - Where the student does not respond to treatment within 30 minutes, an ambulance will be called.

- If the student loses consciousness or has a fit, they will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called immediately; treatment to cool the student will continue until the ambulance arrives.

Where a pupil is suspected to be suffering from heatstroke, 999 will be called immediately and the pupil will be cooled down in line with the procedures for managing heat exhaustion outlined above whilst awaiting medical assistance.

Where a pupil loses consciousness or experiences a fit or seizure, they will be placed in the recovery position, 999 will be called immediately and staff will follow the operator's instructions.

7. Attendance

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

When a student cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the student will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will, therefore, not affect the school's attendance statistics.

If the Headteacher believes the student could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the student will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

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.

During periods of adverse weather conditions, staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and are encouraged to liaise with the Headteacher to discuss difficulties attending work due to adverse weather.

The school understands that, whilst staff members are expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work, it is essential to minimise personal risk. It is therefore at the discretion of staff members as to whether they are able to attend work in adverse weather conditions.

In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff:

- No maximum class size limits are set out.

The school will continue to strive to provide high-quality education in the given circumstances.

8. Exam disruption

Staff will follow procedures in the school's Exam Contingency Plan in the event of disruption due to adverse weather.

If the school has to close, or if a child misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

The school takes full responsibility for informing parents and students of any agreed changes concerning exams in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the student to sit any missed exam later in the year.

9. Clothing

During the Summer months, when temperatures reach above 25 degrees Celsius (°C), everyone working at or attending the school will be encouraged to protect their face, neck and ears using a sun-safe hat with a wide brim.

During the Winter months, students are advised to attend school with suitable clothing and footwear. Appropriate clothing should be worn that is suited to the weather conditions, e.g. wearing waterproof clothing in the rain and wearing gloves in the snow.

10. Emergency plan

In the case of an emergency relating to adverse weather, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the First Aid Policy.

The emergency plan will contain:

- Information on where to find parent contact details.
- Staff contact details for out-of-hours emergencies.
- Details of which staff members have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency.

All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move students to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort children.
- Contact parents.
- Deal with any media interest.

Each member of staff will have access to copies the emergency plan electronically via the Staff Area of Microsoft 365 in case of out-of-hours emergencies.

All parents will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, for instance, their duty to collect children.

11. Monitoring and review

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

The next review date for this policy is Nov 2027.