



Adverse Weather Policy

Document Control

Document Reference:	Adverse Weather Policy
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Issue Date:	January 2019
Review Due:	October 2019
Statutory Yes/No	No

Document History			
Issue	Date	Purpose	Author
1	March 13	Adverse Weather Policy Introduction of new policy	J. Poyser
2	October 16	Adverse Weather Policy Policy review	J. Poyser
3	Jan 2019	Policy review	C Rowlatt

Approval		
Meeting	Date	Chair
Adverse Weather Policy Resource Committee	09.06.10	M. Gerrelli
Adverse Weather Policy Non-statutory policy - in school review	20.10.2016	J. Poyser - Headteacher approval
Adverse Weather Policy Non-statutory policy - in school review	28.01.2019	J. Poyser - Headteacher approval

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Introduction

It is the policy of Wirksworth Federation of Infant Schools (the Federation) to remain open on all days, unless we are forced to close because there is a risk to the health, safety and welfare of children, families and staff. The Headteacher is responsible for making the decision to close the school if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Prolonged and/or forecast excessive snowfall in the immediate area of the school locality.
- Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
- Conditions on site are dangerous.

The Headteacher will also liaise with the Headteacher of Wirksworth Junior School.

Informing parents/carers

If the school is to close:

- The closure will be registered on the Derbyshire County Council School Closures website by the Headteacher. Parents/carers can view closure information at <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures> and are able to sign up to receive notifications when this site is updated.
- Derbyshire County Council will publish this information through their social media channels and the Mobile Derbyshire smartphone app.
- Once the closure has been logged with Derbyshire County Council, Parents/carers and staff will be alerted using the ParentHub app and text service by the School Business Officer.
- We will endeavour to notify parents/carers at the earliest opportunity after a decision has been made.

Attendance

The Federation appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal. Parents/carers should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed. The school recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even where the clear majority of children can get into school. In such instances parents/carers should inform the school of the nature of this exceptional situation, as the school has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the LA. Parents/carers acting on the assumption that the school would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the school of the circumstances that prevents the child coming into school, risk their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

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

Closure during the school day

In the event of school having to close during the day due to unforeseen/worsening weather, or similar unforeseen circumstances, the arrangements listed on page 4 of this policy regarding informing parents/carers will be initiated.

Such an early release will only be contemplated when the conditions outlined in the introduction on page 4 apply.

No child will be allowed home unless collected by a known, responsible adult. If parents/carers wish to change arrangements to allow other adults to collect their child then they must notify school.

Action for staff if the school is closed

If the decision to close is taken prior to the school day starting, staff will be contacted by the School Business Officer using the school messaging service. It is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure that their contact details are kept up to date, informing the Business Officer of any changes.

If the decision to close is taken during the school day, the Headteacher will communicate this decision to the staff, Chair of Governors, LA and Headteacher of Wirksworth Junior School. Those staff who live furthest away from school will be encouraged to leave first.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring there is appropriate supervision of any children whose parents/carers cannot be contacted.

School grounds

In the event of snow, some pathways will be cleared and salted/gritted. Parents/carers, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, could potentially remain slippery. Children will also be reminded of this in classes and assembly.

In icy conditions, the caretakers will salt/grit pathways as follows:

- **Wirksworth Church of England Infant School** - children, parents/carers and visitors will be advised to use the pathway to the main entrance door, around the outside of the playground fence

- **Wirksworth Infant School** - the pathway from the school gate to the main entrance and down the side of the school building to the classroom entrance door

On school days where the school is closed to children but open to staff, the pathways will still, wherever possible, be maintained by the caretaker to prevent build up of ice and snow.

At the beginning and end of the school day the playground may be out of bounds to parents/carers and children.

Going outside at playtime and lunchtime

A full risk assessment is in place in school outlining practice and procedures with regard to children playing outside in adverse weather conditions.

The teacher on playground duty will decide, on a session-by-session basis each playtime and lunchtime, whether the playground is considered suitable to play on. This decision will be based on the risk assessment.

If at all possible, we encourage the children to go outside and experience snow, as we feel it can be exciting for them, and a time to develop their sense of awe and wonder. However, at no point do we allow the children outside, or into particular areas of the playground, if this would compromise their safety.

Outside, children are given clear guidance as to the playground rules, and certain areas may be sectioned off if they are assessed to be potentially unsafe in comparison to the rest of the playground. If conditions change, or risk becomes evident, the children will be brought inside.

Parents/carers should ensure children wear appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear, and have a change of shoes to wear inside school.

Before and after school care

Decisions made by senior management with regard to any aspect of this Adverse Weather Policy will be passed on to staff running the before and after school care service, who will implement the same plan of action. In general if the school is closed the after school service will be closed. However, it is the responsibility of the service staff to inform parents/carers of their intentions.

Policy implementation

In the Headteacher's absence, the senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors and reports to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and makes recommendations for further improvements.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Federation's monitoring and review cycle. The Governing Body may, however, review the policy earlier than this in response to new regulations, or if they receive recommendations on how the policy might be improved.