

Adverse Weather GUIDANCE



1 Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that there is equal and fair treatment for school employees who are unable to attend work, or their normal place of work, or who have to work a shorter day than normal, due to adverse weather.

2 What is adverse weather?

Adverse weather can be defined as snow, ice, fog, high winds and/or floods, which make journeys by road or rail hazardous. This can be both by public and private transport.

The impact of adverse weather can result in hazardous travel conditions. 'Hazardous' can be described as those conditions in which the police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys or indeed travel at all.

2.1 Adverse weather information

During periods of adverse weather, up-to-date weather advice will be available for school employees to access through the extranet and social media forums, as well as from the Police and the usual news channels. The council's Strategic Highways Team publishes information on the Durham County Council website about adverse weather conditions resulting in traffic congestion, alternative routes and details about delays and cessation of public transport.

Head Teachers should, wherever possible, try to discuss with their employees any possible implications of any adverse weather warnings, planning ahead to see if alternative work arrangements should be considered.

3 Working during adverse weather

3.1 Unable to attend work or normal place of work

In all circumstances, employees are expected to make a genuine and reasonable effort to get into work during periods of adverse weather, adapting their means of transport if necessary (for example, using public transport as opposed to their own vehicle or making part or all of their journey by foot). If the police or weather bulletins advise against unnecessary travel, the employee should discuss the situation with their Head Teacher as soon as possible to agree alternative options.

Employees must inform their Head Teacher of their expected time of arrival to assist with internal arrangement and should keep the school informed as the situation develops.

If it is not possible for an employee to attend their normal place of work because of the adverse weather conditions, the employee must notify their Head Teacher as soon as possible, and no later than an hour of their normal starting time. If the Head Teacher is not available then employees should contact the Business manager or Deputy Head Teacher as appropriate.

It is essential that the employee discusses and exhausts all alternative options with their Head Teacher before agreeing action for the day for example:

- Reporting to their nearest Durham County Council school and be available for work at that establishment as required by the Head Teacher (where appropriate);
- Working from home (where appropriate).

The school will not unreasonably withhold pay if employees do not get to work, but must be satisfied that employees have acted reasonably and responsibly in seeking to do so. This should be ascertained following discussions upon a return to work when the school examines the individual circumstances and the effort made to get to work.

Where an employee arrives late or is required to leave work early as a result of adverse weather they will be paid their standard working day as long as they have met the above criteria.

If the employee is unable to attend work during periods of adverse weather due to childcare or caring responsibilities, they will be expected to take the time off as unpaid leave or any other agreed process as determined with their Head Teacher on a case by case basis.

Head Teachers should carefully consider arrangements for pregnant or disabled employees for whom it may be hazardous to try to get to work.

3.2 Training courses/off site meetings

Employees who are scheduled to attend off site meetings during periods of adverse weather should assess whether it is suitable to travel and avoid unnecessary risk. Further consideration to alternative arrangements should be made.

Employees who attend a training course outside the school will be paid their normal hours for the day of training if, once already started, the course tutor/leader decides to finish the course early as a result of adverse weather.

4 Closure of premises

In exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher may make the decision to completely close a school. In this case an employee's standard working hours for the day (as defined in their contract of employment) will be applied.

The Head Teacher should have a specific emergency communication plan in place to address such situations before they occur to avoid any confusion. Schools should notify parents via text and log details of the school closure directly onto the school website, the closure page of Durham County Council website via the option on the schools extranet as well as communicate the information using the Radio station contact numbers (available via the schools extranet).

In circumstances where the school is closed to pupils but remains open to employees, the expectation is that employees make a genuine and reasonable effort to ensure business needs are met during adverse weather and section 3.1 above will apply.

Further advice is available from the Health and Safety Team.

For advice regarding the application of this policy please contact:

HR Advice and Support

hradvice@durham.gov.uk

03000 266 688

HR Operations and Data can be contacted by emailing:

Schools Team

hrschoools@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting:

Occupational Health

occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk

03000 268 999

Health and Safety

hsteam@durham.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

www.healthassuredeap.com

Username: durham Password: council

0800 716 017

Author	Version	Last review	Next review
HR Officer	v 1	October 2018	October 2019

The school complies with all relevant statutory obligations. The school privacy notice provides more specific information on data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed from the school. For more information please contact the school directly.

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the school Data Protection Officer (details available from the school office), or the Information Commissioner's Office.