



## Inclement Weather Policy

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# **Cyngor Sir Powys County Council Inclement Weather Policy for Schools**

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# **Cyngor Sir Powys County Council Inclement Weather Policy for Schools**

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This document clarifies Powys County Council's policy in relation to the impact on schools and the requirement for employees to attend work during severe or inclement weather. Its purpose is to:
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and employees should a school have to deal with severe, inclement weather; and
  - ensure that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather.
- 1.2 Once the decision to close a school has been taken, the Headteacher must also notify other interested parties, including transportation and catering providers, of the decision. If the decision to close the school is made after school transport has started then staff should ensure that the parents of those children are contacted before being returned to their home. If necessary, the children should be kept in school until the parents are contacted.
- 1.3 Reference should be made to the School Transport Policy document, Severe Weather or Utilities Failure -Guidance for Schools and other relevant documentation if the decision to close a school due to inclement weather is taken.

## **2.0 Definition**

- 2.1 Inclement weather can be defined as snow, ice, fog and floods, which render journeys extremely hazardous.
- 2.2 'Extremely hazardous' includes those conditions in which the police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys (which do not include travelling to work) or indeed travel at all.

## **3.0 General**

- 3.1 All Schools must have contingency procedures to remain open wherever possible. The procedures must identify that the decision to close a School will only be made as a last resort.
- 3.2 The responsibility for deciding to close a school because of severe inclement weather lies with the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, as the Headteacher must make the decision in the light of local circumstances. The safety of individual employees who may need to travel further than pupils should also be considered when decisions are made.
- 3.3 This policy aims to maintain a service to parents and pupils for as long as is reasonably practical and that a partial closure of a school should be considered before complete closure. The Headteacher should also consider how the service can be delivered to the pupils when he/she only has a percentage of his/her staff available.

- 3.4 The interest and safety of children and employees are paramount under these circumstances. Allowing children to walk home unsupervised in potentially difficult or dangerous conditions or to return to an empty house may not be in their best interests. The age of the child in question must be taken into consideration when a decision is made.
- 3.5 Employees should only be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, but decisions must be made on an individual basis.

#### **4.0 Considerations - Pupils**

- 4.1 Headteachers must comply with any request from a transport provider that wishes to transport certain pupils early as the operators may be responding to meteorological warnings. However, this does not mean that all pupils should be sent home early.
- 4.2 It may be the case that only those pupils travelling on home to school transport, or those living in rural areas, need to be sent home early. There may be no safety benefits in sending home early those individuals who walk. Indeed, this may cause further problems and may impact on other services if parents need to leave their place of work early in order to look after their children.
- 4.3 Every reasonable effort should be made to contact parents to inform them of the school's closure and to ensure the safety of pupils after they leave the school. Headteachers should consider whether it is preferable to keep children at school until they are collected. Parents should be informed in advance of the school's procedures in the event of inclement weather, and advised to listen to various radio stations for announcements about closures and requests to collect pupils.

#### **5.0 Considerations - Employees**

- 5.1 It is essential that employees who are going to be late or are unable to attend work, telephone the Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than thirty minutes before the start of the school day. Clearly there may be times when this is not possible and allowances will be given in circumstances when there is no access to a telephone. However, contact must be made as soon as reasonably practicable in such instances.
- 5.2 All employees are advised that, in circumstances where they are unable to attend their normal place of work either because the school has been closed to pupils and staff by the Headteacher, or they are unable to travel to their normal place of work then they are **not** to attend their nearest school.
- 5.3 Employees are advised that, in circumstances where conditions prevent their attendance at their normal place of work, then they and their Headteacher must agree an appropriate course of action or suitable alternative, for example:
- undertaking appropriate professional duties;
  - undertaking CPD which must be agreed with the Headteacher
  - any other reasonable local arrangement as agreed between employee and Headteacher.

- Taking the day/part day as unpaid leave.

It is deemed that it would not be unreasonable for the Headteacher to have prepared CPD activities and if the school is closed that the CPD activity could be undertaken at home.

- 5.4 Employees may be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, or that of a dependent, but decisions must be made on an individual basis and sanctioned by line managers, and consideration given to adopting one of the alternative provisions stated in paragraph 5.3.
- 5.5 If the school has been closed by the Headteacher, **all** employees will be paid at their normal daily rate. This will include supply teachers who have attended the school to find that the decision to close has been taken or have been booked and are informed by phone that the school has been closed.
- 5.6 Any decision regarding leaving the school early must be made in consultation with the Headteacher.
- 5.7 If pupils are sent home early due to hazardous driving conditions, consideration to employees who travel to work by car should also be taken by the Headteacher and sent home if appropriate.
- 5.8 In the event that the school remains closed and the weather conditions do not improve, resulting in absence of more than one day, employees should maintain regular contact with the Headteacher.