

# Meadowbrook College

## Adverse Weather Policy

Reviewed  
Date of review

January 2016  
January 2018

Signed: Head of Establishment

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Chair of Governors

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## **Policy**

The Academy's policy is to remain open unless it is forced to close because there is a risk to the health and safety of staff and pupils. The school will only close if there are clear and identifiable risks involved in remaining open. Every effort will be made to keep the school open in order to reduce disruption to pupils' learning.

The decision to close the school rests with the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

## **Factors to be considered**

A proportionate approach to the risks involved will be followed when the decision to close the school or remain open is taken. Efforts will be made to conduct a Risk Assessment of the local conditions and of the school site, by members of the Senior Leadership Team and by the Business Manager. It may not be possible to conduct a Risk Assessment on each day of closure, in view of the potential risk to the health and safety of staff in reaching the school site.

The following factors will be considered by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors:

1. Health and safety risks posed by the condition of the city and local roads, and local pavements:
2. Health and safety risks posed by the condition of the school site, including the car parks, and pedestrian access around the site:
3. The provision of essential services such as heating, electricity and water supply within all school buildings throughout the day:
4. The local 24 hour weather forecast provided by The Met Office ([www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)). The Headteacher will consider the weather forecast for the beginning of the school day, and will also consider what the conditions are predicted to be at the end of the school day to ensure that all pupils reach home safely:
5. Advice from motoring organisations and police regarding travel conditions:
6. Advice from Oxfordshire County Council's Integrated Transport department regarding the operation of taxi companies, at the start and the end of the school day:

7. An assessment of whether sufficient staff are likely to reach work. In particular, consideration will be given to:
  - a. The staff numbers required to ensure the health and safety and supervision of pupils

## **Communication of closure**

A decision to close the school will be taken by 6.30am on the morning of the closure to allow adequate notice to staff, parents/carers and taxi companies. If forecasts make it very likely that the school will not be able to open the next day, then it may be appropriate to take this decision the previous afternoon. Closure of the school will be notified to local radio stations by the Headteacher. Closures are announced on BBC Radio Oxford (95.2 FM), Heart FM (102.6 or 97.4 FM), FM 107.9 and Jack FM (106.8 FM). The website gives details of school closures and is updated regularly (including late at night and early in the morning) during periods of bad weather ([www.meadowbrook.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.meadowbrook.oxon.sch.uk)).

### **Code word**

In passing information to the radio stations be brief and keep the message simple. Quote the school name, location, type of school, and **code word**. Always use this, even when leaving a message, as it reduces the chances of a hoax call being successful. Try to listen to the information being broadcast and contact the radio station immediately to correct any inaccuracies.

The Oxford County Council School Organisation & Planning Directorate, should be contacted every quarter for updated code words.

Parents/carers are asked to listen to the radio and visit the Meadowbrook College website rather than telephone the school, as reception staff may not be in work. Parents/carers should not telephone radio stations, but should listen for information.

Staff will be informed by phone call or text by a member of the Leadership Team by 7.15am.

Staff should check their diaries to ensure that meetings involving visitors to the school are cancelled. If they are scheduled to represent the school at meetings or training courses offsite and are unable to travel, they should present their apologies.

## **Opening in bad weather**

It may be necessary to adapt the timetable, while delivering as much of the curriculum as possible. Staff must ensure that any alternative activities are risk assessed before commencement.

Alternative arrangements will be made for pupils' break and lunchtimes if necessary, and staff must observe these arrangements.

In certain circumstances, it may be possible to open the school to staff but not to pupils. Staff may be able to work in classrooms whilst the site is made safe. An ongoing Risk Assessment will be made during the day to ensure that staff do not remain on site in deteriorating conditions.

## **Deterioration of weather during the school day**

If the weather deteriorates during the school day, it may be necessary to send pupils and staff home early. The school will close early only in extreme circumstances.

Some pupils travel from throughout Oxfordshire, and neighbouring counties, and have long taxi journeys. The Local Authority's Integrated Transport department and taxi companies will be informed as soon as the decision to close is made. Staff will ensure that pupils do not leave the school site unless parents and carers are aware of the situation, and safe arrangements for transport home have been made. The school will remain open with staff on hand until the last pupil has left.

## **Implications for staff**

The following advice applies in relation to paying staff who do not attend work because of bad weather. The principles that apply in these circumstances are that:

- Employers have a duty of care to their employees, staff should be advised that their safety is important and that they should not travel if it is unsafe to do so.
- However, individual employees have a responsibility to attend work. If an employee fails to attend work due to bad weather or lack of transport he/she is not entitled to receive pay. However, this does not mean that pay should automatically be deducted.

In practice:

- If the school is open to employees and/or pupils, each employee will need to consider travelling conditions for his/her journey to work. If some

employees do not attend work the Headteacher should satisfy him/herself that the employee had a good reason and could not reasonably have been expected to get to work. In these circumstances it is reasonable to expect that members of staff work at home and to pay them as normal.

- If a decision is made to close the school, staff should be paid as normal.

## **Supporting Policies**

To assist the School the following policies exist in conjunction with this policy:

- Health and Safety Policy
- School Emergency and Critical Incident Policy