

# Adverse weather guidance

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.

Where the headteacher is the employee concerned, any reference to the headteacher in this policy should be replaced with the chair of governors.

## 1 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.

### 1.1 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 e.g. DCC facebook and twitter accounts, 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.

Headteachers 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.

## 2 Working during adverse weather

### 2.1 Difficulties attending 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 headteacher as soon as possible to agree alternative options.

Employees must inform their headteacher 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 headteacher as soon as possible, and no later than an hour before their normal starting time.

If the headteacher is not available, then employees should contact another nominated person within school as appropriate.

It is essential that the employee discusses and exhausts all alternative options with their headteacher before agreeing action for the day, which may include reporting to an alternative place of work or 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 as normal 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 headteacher on a case by case basis.

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

## **2.2 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.

Where an employee attends an external training course that finishes early as a result of adverse weather, no deduction will be made from their pay.

## **3 Closure of premises**

In exceptional circumstances the headteacher may make the decision to completely close a school. In this case employees will continue to be paid as normal.

The headteacher 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 school's extranet.

If the school is closed to pupils but remains open to employees, then employees must make genuine and reasonable efforts to attend work and follow the guidance in section 2.1 above.



This policy has been developed by the HR Advice and Support team, based on current legislation and best practice. If you would like any advice on the application of this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the team:

<b>Telephone</b>	03000 266688
<b>Email</b>	hradvice@durham.gov.uk

**Further support can be accessed by contacting (subject to SLA buy in):**

<b>Payroll and Employee Services</b>	<a href="mailto:pesschools@durham.gov.uk">pesschools@durham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Occupational Health</b>	<a href="mailto:occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk">occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<a href="mailto:hsteam@durham.gov.uk">hsteam@durham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Employee Assistance Programme</b>	<a href="http://www.healthassuredeap.com">www.healthassuredeap.com</a> Username: durham Password: council 0800 716017

<b>Author</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Last review</b>	<b>Next review</b>
LC	v 1.1	September 2020	September 2022

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.