

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

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Statement of intent

It is the aim of Howard House School to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner. Howard House School intends to, wherever possible, make the decision to close the school before the teaching day commences, rather than defer the decision and delay the opening of the school.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during adverse weather conditions.
- To make clear the grounds for a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- To advise and inform staff and parents/carers of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to adverse weather conditions.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equalities policy

Decision to close

1.1. The decision to close the school will be made by the Head of School/equivalent.

1.2. The site manager and the proprietor will be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

1.3. In the absence of the Head of School/equivalent, the Senior Leader will assume the responsibility of the Head of School/equivalent in relation to the Adverse Weather Policy.

1.4. The school will be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site.
- Staff numbers are insufficient for the school to be operated safely.

1.5. In the event of school closure:

- The Head of School/equivalent will inform staff and parents/carers via ClassCharts / text message / Phone Call
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates.

1.6. In the event of the school having to close during the day, parents/carers will be contacted via text message or telephone, using the number provided on the emergency contacts list, and asked to collect their student from the school.

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY



1.7. A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

Remaining open in adverse weather conditions

2.1. If the school remains open when there has been snowfall or the site is icy, access to the site for pedestrians will be restricted to the pedestrian gates only.

2.2. All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted.

2.3. A notice will be erected to inform that vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds do so at their own risk.

2.4. At the Head of School/equivalent's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to students and parents/carers.

2.5. All persons entering the school buildings are asked to ensure they wipe their feet thoroughly, in order to reduce slip hazards.

Health and safety

3.1. Howard House School has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

3.2. Howard House School will be liable if it is found that the school has been negligent in its responsibilities and has not taken all reasonable measures, given the circumstances, to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, visitors and parents/carers entering the school site.

3.3. The Head of School/equivalent is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's health and safety policies and procedures.

3.4. Staff, visitors and parents/carers have the personal responsibility to express caution and take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the school grounds:

- Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any students under their supervision.
- If anyone believes that the site is unsafe, it is advised that they do not enter the school grounds.

3.5. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the site manager/care manager will assess the school site and inform the Head of School/equivalent at 7.00am of the state of site.

3.6. A risk assessment of the site will be conducted in order to assess any potential hazards due to the weather conditions.

3.7. Closing the school is a reasonable decision if students or staff are at risk of serious injury due to the weather conditions.

3.8. When roads are impassable, the health and safety issue is overridden by the practical issue of access.

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY



Limited staff numbers

4.1. During periods of adverse weather conditions, the school will be flexible with teaching when subject to reduced staff numbers.

4.2. In order to comply with health and safety regulations, different age groups may be brought together to be taught under the supervision of the available teachers and support staff:

- No maximum class size limits are set out.
- However, a limit of 5 students per class will apply if the majority of students will reach the age of five, six or seven in that school year.

4.3. The school will continue to strive to provide high quality education in the given circumstances.

Attendance statistics

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

5.2. When a student cannot attend the school due to adverse weather conditions, the student will be marked in the register as having an authorised absence and will therefore not affect the school's attendance statistics.

5.3. If the Head of School/equivalent believes the student could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the student will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

5.4. 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 prevent the student coming into school, risk their student's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Exam disruption

6.1. If the school has to close, or if a student misses an exam due to adverse weather conditions, the school will make alternative arrangements with the relevant awarding body.

6.2. The school takes full responsibility for informing parents/carers and students of any agreed changes concerning an examination in adverse weather conditions. This includes:

- Using alternative venues.
- Exam results being generated by the awarding body, based on other assessments in the same subject.
- The opportunity for the students to sit any missed exam later in the year.

Emergency plan

7.1. In the case of an emergency, the school will follow the procedure in accordance with the First Aid Policy.

7.2. All nominated staff will be trained to:

- Contact and liaise with emergency services.
- Provide first aid.
- Move students to a safe place.
- Calm and comfort students.
- Contact parents/carers.
- Deal with any media interest.

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY



7.3. All parents/carers will be sent a letter informing them of their responsibilities, e.g. their duty to collect students.

Procedures for 'working at home' adverse weather day.

8.1 Staff will be in touch via email/whatsapp.

8.2 Activities will consist of PD, English, Mathematics and Science via GCSEpods.

8.3 If the school closes as a half day due to the weather the students will be expected to log into GCSEpods and ClassCharts.

8.4 If the adverse weather lasts for longer than 1 day a structured home learning plan will be put in place communicated via dojo.