



Severe Weather Policy

This policy is applicable to the Wonder Learning Partnership (WLP)

Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Wonder Learning Partnership website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version date on your copy matches that of the document online.

The Wonder Learning Partnership welcomes the support of the recognised trade unions in seeking to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner and actively encourages employees who are members of a trade union to seek the support of their trade union representative at the earliest opportunity.

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and leaders with guidance regarding the approach the school will take in times of bad weather (e.g. heavy snow or flooding).

The Wonder Learning Partnership (WLP) recognises that during periods of severe weather, staff may face difficulties in travelling to and from work. Wherever possible, the school will remain open, and this will form the basis for decisions taken by the school regarding the attendance (or continued attendance) of staff at work. The school will take into account advice issued by the police, weather centre or local media in relation to prevailing weather conditions and the advisability of travel as well as the impact on the ability of the school to remain open and the health and safety of staff.

It is expected that staff attend work wherever possible, acting responsibly and proactively. Where staff have individual concerns (e.g. emergency caring responsibilities due to the closure of their child's school) they are encouraged to raise those concerns with the appropriate member of SLT or Headteacher/Head of School of their school or in their absence the CEO.

This policy applies to all employees of the WLP, any staff seconded to WLP, contracted and agency workers and any other individual working on and off the WLP sites.

Adverse and severe weather events are defined by reference to the MET Office Weather Warning system and apply when severe weather means an employee cannot get to their normal place of work or poses a significant risk to their health, wellbeing and safety.

Roles and Responsibilities

The COO and Headteacher/Head of Schools are responsible for ensuring that staff are treated fairly and consistently in the application of this policy. The COO and headteacher/Head of School will advise in response to bad weather.

The CEO, COO and Headteacher/Head of School will decide on whether or not the school can remain open and will ensure the Severe Weather Policy is adhered to.

The CEO, COO and Headteacher/Head of School are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and procedure. The team will also ensure that the policy is implemented fairly and consistently, whilst acknowledging that there will be individual circumstances that will need to be taken into account.

Leaders

Leaders and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they carry out their responsibilities fairly and consistently, ensuring staff are aware that it is expected that they attend work wherever possible.

Staff

Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and for following any further instructions issued by or on behalf of the CEO/Headteacher/Head of School.

All staff should make every effort to attend work wherever possible. Staff are encouraged to think ahead and have a contingency plan in mind, should bad weather occur. Staff may need to consider alternative methods of travel and alternative routes. Staff are also encouraged to consider the options they face should their normal childcare arrangements be disrupted. If you are unable to get into work or you know you are going to be delayed, please contact your school as soon as possible.

Equality and Diversity

WLP is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high-quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged

Where an employee has a disability that restricts their ability to travel, the employee and their manager may wish to consider making contingency arrangements, bearing in mind 'reasonable adjustments' reflected in the Equality Act 2010.

Vision and Values

WLP's vision is to develop a culture of respect, honesty and high aspiration, encouraging staff and pupils/students to inspire each other and learn to value greatness, ambition and achievement of all kinds.

WLP schools aim to remain open when there is bad weather and will only close when absolutely necessary, ensuring that pupil/student learning is not affected wherever possible.

Severe Weather

Staff can expect to be treated fairly and consistently in circumstances of severe weather. Where staff make every effort to attend work and arrive late or have to turn back after making significant efforts to attend, their pay will not be affected, therefore they will receive normal pay.

Where staff have no option but to leave early, they should access the Special Leave Policy in terms of access to emergency leave.

It is recognised that whilst all staff are encouraged to attend work in bad weather wherever possible, where severe weather and individual circumstances mean that the employee cannot travel to work (e.g. snowed in at home) they will be required to either access the school network and work from home (teachers have been provided with laptops) or make the time up at the discretion of a member of the SLT, who must be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate action is taken. If a member of staff cannot attend work due to childcare issues unpaid leave will be granted.

Where the Headteacher/Head of School/CEO decides that the school must close due to severe weather, staff sent home will be paid their normal pay.

Where the school is closed and some staff are required to remain at school, consideration should be given to the rationale for this decision (e.g. do they live locally? Have they volunteered to remain at work and have assessed any associated health and safety risks?)

Monitoring

Compliance and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher/Head of School.

Appendix A: Guidance for Staff

Plan Ahead

- Check with colleagues if there is anyone that passes near your house that would choose to drive in bad weather (e.g. a confident driver with a safe, suitable vehicle) ,would be able to collect you on their way into work and that you would be comfortable sharing a vehicle with.
- Consider alternative childcare arrangements should your normal arrangements be disrupted (e.g. if the nursery/school closes).
- Consider alternative routes (if you normally use back roads could you travel more safely on a busier route?).
- Consider alternative methods of travel (e.g. walking rather than driving if you live locally).
- Ensure you are familiar with the Severe Weather Guidance.

On the Day

- If you can't get into work, contact the school through the appropriate systems described in the Staff Absence Policy at the earliest opportunity.
- If you are notified that your normal childcare arrangements are disrupted (e.g. school/nursery closure) and you have no alternative arrangements available to you, refer to the Special Leave Policy and discuss your circumstances with the Headteacher/Head of School/People & Estate Lead or People & Culture Lead. You will be unable to bring your children into school unless they are pupils that already attend one of the WLP schools and are at an age where they require only light supervision.