



# **ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY**

**September 2023**

**To be reviewed September 2024**



## Statement of Intent

The James Montgomery Academy Trust (thereafter referred to as JMAT) aim to ensure that schools remain open during adverse weather conditions, when practically possible, providing that this can be done in a safe manner.

Our schools intend to, wherever possible, make the decision to close 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

## Procedure

***JMAT must be advised of any school closures and can be contacted on 01709 763905 or via Jacqueline Oliver, Strategic Operations Lead***

In the event of the school closure:

- The Headteacher will inform staff and parents/carers via text message
- The Headteacher or ICT leader will post an update on the school website
- The site manager will display 'closure' signs on the school's entrance gates
- The Headteacher will call and inform the local radio station
- The Headteacher will inform JMAT Senior Leaders.
- JMAT will inform the LA

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 child from the school.

A closure of the school during the day and an early release of staff will only be considered in extreme circumstances. Skeleton and local staffing will remain on site to accommodate pupils who are unable to be collected earlier than the usual end of school day.

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## Decision to Close

The decision to close the school will typically be made by the Headteacher. The site manager and CEO may be consulted when making a decision about school closure.

In the case of regional events this may be superseded by a direct instruction from the Trust. The CEO or Strategic Operations lead will enforce the message by communicating directly with both headteacher and School Business Managers.

In the absence of the Headteacher, the deputy Headteacher will assume the responsibility of the Headteacher in relation to this Adverse Weather Policy.

In the event of disruption to normal travel to work arrangements, for example, because of exceptionally poor weather conditions, road flooding etc. employees should make every effort to get to school where it is safe to do so. This also includes in circumstances where the school may be closed to pupils.

Where the Headteacher considers it was not safe/possible for the employees to travel to school, or they instruct staff not to attend work, and it was not considered possible for an individual to work from home, time off with pay will be granted for the duration of the disturbance.

The school may close if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The conditions on site are considered to be unsafe and are likely to present danger to users of the site.
- The operating conditions of the infrastructure within setting will be affected significantly.
- The staff numbers are insufficient for the school to be operated safely.
- Key Personnel are unable to attend site i.e Appropriate numbers of First Aiders, DSL, Facilities Management in order to satisfy statutory compliance.

## **Health and Safety**

JMAT has a duty of care to anyone accessing the site and surrounding grounds.

JMAT 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 pupils, staff, visitors and parents/carers entering the school site.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring safety on the school site, in accordance with the school's health and safety policies and procedures.

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

Individuals must take responsibility for the health and safety of any children under their supervision.

In the event of adverse winter weather conditions, the site manager will assess the school site and inform the Headteacher in a reasonable timeframe of the state of the site.

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

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

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

## **Remaining open in adverse weather conditions**

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

The site manager will place health and safety caution signs to warn users of the increased hazards on site.

All pathways, wherever practically possible, will have been cleared and gritted and a notice will be erected to inform that vehicles and pedestrians entering the school grounds do so at their own risk.

At the Headteacher's discretion, during periods of adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out-of-bounds to pupils and parents/carers.

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

## **Limited staff numbers**

During periods of adverse weather conditions, the school will be flexible with teaching when subject to reduced staff numbers. Further flexibility applied while operating during the coronavirus pandemic. Remote Learning may be applied as a whole school approach to minimise risk involved in travel.

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.

## **Attendance Statistics**

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

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

If the Headteacher believes the pupil could have safely made it to school but did not attend, the pupil will be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence.

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 child coming into school, risk their child's absence being registered as an unauthorised absence.

## **Emergency Plan**

In the case of an emergency, the school will follow their planned emergency procedure, in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

All staff members who have agreed to perform certain tasks during an emergency will be trained to:

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

## **Monitoring and review**

The effectiveness of the Adverse Weather Policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

This policy is to be reviewed annually.