

SNOW POLICY – TEMPORARY CHANGES TO SCHOOL DAY AND CLOSURE OF SCHOOL TO STUDENTS

This policy provides guidance to staff and parents / carers on the procedure and action the school will take in the event of extreme weather conditions.

Severe weather before the start of school

In the event of extreme inclement weather, particularly heavy overnight snowfall, the Head Teacher will undertake an urgent risk assessment of the effect the weather will have on the normal operation of the school. This review will assess the ability to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of students and staff. Factors considered will include the safe access to the school site, transport implications for students and staff and the ability to ensure the school can maintain safe student / staff ratios.

The school fully appreciates the disruption to education for pupils and difficulties caused to parents / carers when school is unexpectedly closed to students and, whenever possible, The Education Village will aim to keep school open.

Temporary Changes To The School Day

In attempting to ensure school remains open, the Head Teacher may temporarily change the opening hours of school, particularly if delaying the start of school will allow staff additional travel time to help ensure pupil / staff ratios can be achieved. Any alteration will have full regard to the health, safety and welfare of students and any students who arrive early will be given access to the school and staff will supervise all students until the revised start time.

For students who access school using formal school transport, arrangements for access will be agreed with the Local Authority transport team.

Any temporary changes to the school day will be broadcast using the school closure arrangements shown below.

Decision To Close School To Students

When the Head Teacher considers it is unsafe for school to open, the school will contact the Local Authority and advise the school closures team of the decision to close the school. This decision will be made as early as possible on the day of closure and always before 8.00 am

The Local Authority school closure team will contact local radio stations to broadcast the closure of the school and display the temporary closure of the school on their website, www.darlington.gov.uk

In addition any parents and staff who have provided mobile phone details to school will be sent a SMS text message confirming the temporary closure of the school.

The school stresses that this decision will only be taken when the severity of the weather conditions make it impossible to open school and operate safely.

In the event of extreme overnight weather conditions, all parents / carers and staff are advised to listen to the Local Radio stations or check the local authority website for information on the potential closure of the school. Please try to avoid telephoning the school as this diverts resources away from the efforts to ensure the school can remain open.

When it has been confirmed the school is closed, parents / carers must not attempt to bring students into school.

Additional Guidance To Staff

When the decision has been made to either temporarily change the school day or close the school to students, staff should still make all efforts to attend school and report to the main office on arrival.

Any staff unable to travel to school should follow the usual procedures for staff absence. A decision regarding any loss of pay will be made on a case by case basis by the Head Teacher. It must be stressed that when the school is closed to students, the school itself would normally remain open for staff. The school will use the SMS text alert system to inform staff of any change to attendance arrangements.

Severe Weather During The School Day

Once the school is open for the day, students will normally remain in school until the formal end of school.

In exceptional circumstances when the weather forecast indicates the potential for the imminent arrival of severe weather, the Head Teacher may consider sending students home early. In all cases, students will not be allowed to leave early until their parents / carers have been contacted and confirmation obtained that the student can either be collected or somebody will be at home to receive them on arrival.