



WESTBOURNE  
ACADEMY

# **Inclement Weather Procedures**

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

This document confirms our Inclement Weather Procedures and clarifies a number of important matters relating to severe weather and includes information provided by the Government.

This document compliments [Westbourne Academy's Inclement Weather Policy](#), and should be read in conjunction with it.

At Westbourne Academy we recognise that school closure is disruptive to a child's education and is also inconvenient for parents. The Local Authority's advice is to remain open except in the most extreme or exceptional circumstances. The health, safety and welfare of our students and staff is also of paramount importance and so this is another consideration in making any decisions.

### **Preparing for severe weather:**

We have already made a number of preparations such as maintaining supplies of grit salt, having suitable management procedures in place, and making sure we have effective communication systems in place.

### **Deciding whether to close the school due to severe weather:**

The Principal is responsible for making the decision about the closure of a school, and this decision has to be made by 7am. The Principal then notifies the LA who passes the details on to the media (and updates the Council's website – <http://schoolclosures.suffolk.gov.uk>). We will update our own website, our social media profiles, and will then also send a text message to all staff and parents via our text messaging system.

### **Other options:**

The Principal can also decide to open later/close earlier, to limit the extent to which students have to move between buildings, or to plan the curriculum offer/develop strategies to ensure students are supervised effectively with the available staff.

### **Ofsted inspections:**

In the event that there is a disruption to the school because of severe weather (either that it is closed or open with reduced staffing), the advice to Ofsted inspectors is that they should still go ahead and do as much as they can. Ultimately, the decision to proceed will be that of the inspection team, and will be based on whether they can obtain sufficient evidence.

### **Unauthorised absences:**

The DfE have revised the regulations so that they do not inhibit a school when making a decision about staying open. When student cannot get to school because of severe weather we can use code Y, which means the absence will not affect our attendance statistics.

### **Staff travel to school:**

Staff have their own responsibility for getting to work, and each person must ultimately make his/her own assessment of the individual day's weather conditions and the risks that they may pose. Often the Police say that people should not go out unless their journey is essential, but getting to work and school are within the overall definition of essential, and so this is not in itself a reason why staff should not consider making the journey to work. This guidance does not compel staff to take risks; it encourages everyone to make good plans in advance of bad weather.

All staff have a responsibility for ensuring that they make every effort to reach school if it is open, bearing in mind that they are not expected to put themselves at risk. Even is a decision is made to

not to travel at the start of the day, the obligation continues during the course of the day if weather or travel conditions improve.

Despite closure, staff still have a duty to attend school if they possibly can and a declaration of closure does not in itself prevent staff from reporting for work, as long as they are not putting themselves at risk by travelling.

The Principal does not have a duty of care towards staff's journeys to and from school, and this is the same policy that applies to staff across SCC.

**Clearing snow and ice around the site:**

We will take steps to clear and grit, at least, the higher risk parts of the site, and in doing so will ensure we take reasonable care. Wherever possible these will include the main entrances, high pedestrian steps and main routes. As the academy site is on a slope it is often not possible to clear and grit all paths/pedestrian routes, but the main routes will be prioritised.

**General guidance for clearing snow and ice :**

The government is keen to see communities helping themselves and has provided reassurance that the risk of liability arising from responsible behaviour needn't dissuade people from being involved.

Lord Young's report on health and safety includes mention of liability of acts of good citizenship ...

*"One of the great misconceptions, often perpetuated by the media, is that we can be liable for the consequences of any voluntary acts on our part ... this is another manifestation of the fear of litigation. In fact there is no liability in the normal way. Yet this belief is particularly pernicious, as it may deter people from engaging in organised voluntary activities in the mistaken belief that they can be sued should anything go wrong. People who seek to do good in our society should not fear litigation as a result of their actions. There is no such liability in such cases unless negligence can be proved".*