



Adverse Weather Policy & Guidelines

Rationale

The Department for Education advises:

“As school staff and governors will appreciate, school closures disrupt children's education and make life very difficult for working parents who may not be able to make childcare arrangements at short notice. This in turn disrupts the services and businesses in which those parents work. Schools should therefore plan for severe weather on the assumption that they will generally stay open”.

The Headteacher and Governing Body recognise the importance of avoiding school closure in order to ensure that the students' education is not adversely affected. In the event of hazardous weather conditions, however, the priority of the Headteacher and the Governing Body is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all students, staff and visitors to the Graham School sites. Closure of the School may therefore be necessary, in order to minimise the risk to students and staff.

Guidelines

1. School Closure

In the event of adverse weather, any decision to close the School will be made by the Headteacher. This decision will only be made after careful assessment of the weather forecast, and the conditions on the main routes to/from school, and also after consultation with Headteachers in neighbouring schools. In the event of a decision being taken to close the School, the following procedure will be implemented:

- I. The Headteacher will assess weather conditions at 07.00. It is helpful if staff in outlying areas (e.g. Whitby, Malton York etc) can update the Headteacher via email on the weather conditions in their local area.
- II. Any decision to close the School will be made by 07.30 – this will be communicated to staff via email and the school website;
- III. Announcements regarding school closure will be communicated to students and parents via the School website, the Keep Kids Safe system and the local radio (Yorkshire Coast Radio: 96.2FM & Radio York:95.5FM).

2. Public Examinations

In the event that public examinations are scheduled to take place during a school closure, the Graham School Examination Emergency Contingency Plan produced by the Examinations Office will come into operation. (The plan has been produced in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Joint Contingency Plan, produced by the Examination Boards in December 2011, a copy of which is available on the School Website).



3. School Remaining Open

- I. In the event of the School remaining open during adverse weather conditions, **staff have a duty to make every effort to report to school as normal, in order to ensure that classes they are timetabled to teach are adequately supervised and receive their normal curriculum entitlement.**
- II. It is essential, however, to minimise personal risk when travelling to/from school. Staff are therefore advised to assess local conditions and plan sufficient time to journey to the School safely.
- III. It may be safer for staff who live close to mainline railway stations to travel by train (e.g. Malton, York, Driffield, Bridlington and Hull).
- IV. In the event of a member of staff being unable to reach the School due to road/mainline train closure, he/she should contact the School Office. In such circumstances, the Headteacher may advise the member of staff to complete Planning, Preparation and Assessment at home for the morning, and to attempt the journey later in the day, when roads have cleared; alternatively, in severe cases of poor weather, the member of staff may be advised to stay at home all day and undertake PPA.
- V. The Headteacher will continue to monitor weather conditions during the day. If the weather continues to deteriorate, a decision may be made to close early.

4. Student Safety

- I. Tutors should remind students of the importance of wearing suitable clothing and footwear to/from school (e.g. a warm winter coat, wellingtons/boots, hat scarf, gloves etc). Students should, however, change into their normal footwear in the buildings -this minimises the amount of ice and snow brought into school which can cause hazardous conditions on flooring (see safety section below). Hats and scarves should not be worn in the buildings/classrooms.
- II. Many students see snow and icy conditions as an ideal opportunity for play. The throwing of snowballs is permitted at Graham School but only between willing participants and in designated areas: students should not throw snowballs anywhere near the buildings or in the playgrounds – **snowballing is permitted on the fields only.**
- III. **In adverse weather conditions, all available staff are requested to be on duty during the morning break and after school to assist with student supervision** (refer to the Directed Time Policy 2011-12). Assistance at lunchtime, whilst not mandatory, is always greatly appreciated, as increased staff supervision encourages sensible student behaviour in the snow.
- IV. Wherever possible, staff should wear a high visibility jacket to ensure that they are clearly visible.
- V. Staff should encourage students to walk sensibly and to use the cleared areas around the School.
- VI. In times of adverse weather, communication and vigilance is the key to ensuring the safety of students and staff. Anyone who has any concerns regarding the safety of any area should inform Gerald Smith/Claire Nelsey/Janette Harwood/the Site Supervisors immediately.



Safety in the School Buildings

In snow, ice and wet weather, the main walkways within school may become wet and slippery.

- All staff should encourage students to walk in calm and orderly manner.
- Caretakers should dry/mop any excess water on flooring after break and lunchtimes times.
- Staff, students, visitors and others should be encouraged to wipe their footwear on the mats at the entrance to buildings to avoid causing internal slip hazards.

5. Accident/Incident Reporting

All accidents or incidents should be reported using the existing school system.

6. Gritting

Refer to the separate Gritting Protocol which is available on the Staff Portal.

Conclusion

Providing an educational service of the highest standard, together with ensuring the safety of students, staff and members of our local community, are of paramount importance. It is therefore important that staff, students and parents adhere to the guidelines within this policy, in order that the services offered by the School are maintained to the highest level possible and that safety is not compromised.

G. Hancock, HeadTeacher, Graham School
December 2010

Policy produced and revised by A. Harrison, January 2012