



**St. Mark's Primary
School, Hamilton**

Adverse Weather Plan



St. Mark's Primary School, Hamilton
South Lanarkshire Council



Education Resources
Executive Director: Jim Gilhooly

Adverse Weather Procedures

In all emergency situations the safety and welfare of our children is paramount.

Pre-planning, preparation and communication arrangements for adverse weather conditions are the main components set out in this Adverse Weather Plan and the following key principles apply in St. Mark's Primary School, Hamilton.

Key principles:

- the overall objective for all staff is to ensure the safety and welfare of our children;
- the Head Teacher will keep the school open wherever practical in order to minimise the impact on the education provision for learners. However, the Head Teacher makes the decisions that lead to closure taking account of local conditions in liaison with Education Resources HQ. Where the school is considering closing early this should normally happen after lunchtime thereby giving time for transport contractors/parents/carers/crossing patrollers etc to be notified.
- only in times of extreme weather conditions across the authority/country and following a risk assessment will a decision be made to close all establishments;
- There is a coherent and co-ordinated approach and clarity on the means of communications to be used for alerting parents and carers and staff timeously i.e. emails, texts, letters, South Lanarkshire Council website and Twitter;
- when the school is to be closed, consideration is given to providing children/pupils with the support needed to enable them to continue learning;
- Teaching and non teaching staff are aware of the school's emergency plan/arrangements and of their responsibility for ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people.

When planning for, and during periods of adverse weather the Head Teacher takes into account

- current weather conditions in the area;
- weather forecast(s);
- accumulations of snow that have fallen in areas and/or are predicted to fall;
- road and traffic conditions and impact on school and public transport;
- whilst the assumption is that staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to report for work consideration requires to be given to the to the impact of disruption to transport, with difficult driving conditions likely and longer journey times and the impact on staff to make their way to their school/establishment prior to the arrival of children.

Communication arrangements

In St Mark's Primary School we have, as part of our contingency planning :

- the contact details for all parents and carers of our pupils readily available;
- the contact details of teaching, facilities and support staff;
- the contact details for transport providers and information on the names of pupils who travel on specific buses;
- process for providing parents/carers/staff and transport providers with reasonable notice of decisions to close early and details of when the school will reopen in order that parents can ensure appropriate childcare arrangements;
- we make use of text/web messages where possible to communicate with and inform parents and carers, as this has proved to be very effective during previous periods of adverse weather;
- Consideration of any groups out on visits, residential trips, outdoor learning activities, and/or work experience, placements etc when adverse weather begins;

- Consideration of whether any visits residential trips, outdoor learning activities, and/or work experience, planned to take place during times when weather forecasts are predicting adverse conditions such as heavy snow or icy conditions
- Consideration of needs of children who may be educated in places out with the school.

South Lanarkshire Council covers both rural and urban areas and because of this when faced with challenging weather conditions our experience is that justification for prolonged or blanket closure of schools across the authority are very rare.

Action Points

The Council through Education Resources will:-

- build on the strengths gained from experiences over the last few years with the Corporate Management Team continuing to take responsibility for strategic planning;
- work closely with the emergency planning team and roads winter management service as crucial participants in co-ordinating and detailing the operational practices that will be put into place during periods of adverse weather;
- provide weather updates to establishments in the run up to and during periods of predicted adverse weather. This information should also be used to inform decisions about outdoor learning activities, and educational excursions;
- use its website and media channels to publish information on schools that are open/closed. The school adopts a similar approach.

Attached are:

Appendix A Adverse Weather Action Plan for St. Mark's Primary.

This shows the pathways agreed with Community Resources that will be created from the entrance area into the school building during times of adverse weather.

Appendix B Information for Employees (Teachers and local government staff)

Appendix C General information – questions and answers

- Road/car parks/gritting
- School transport arrangement
- Trips and visits, educational excursions



Appendix B

Employees (both Local Government & Teachers)

What happens if a member of staff cannot attend work during severe weather conditions?

Each employee is responsible for ensuring their attendance at work. The onus for attendance at work rests with the individual. All staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to report for work. Anyone who is unable to attend work due to severe weather conditions, must contact their line manager in person to advise them of the situation as early as possible before they are due to commence work.

What if it is not possible due to road and weather conditions to get to their normal place of work?

If an employee cannot attend their normal work place due to severe weather conditions then the following options should be considered.

- Alternative location Is there an alternative location within South Lanarkshire that the employee can make their way to? (another school/office)
- Homeworking If it is not possible to attend your normal workplace or to work or assist in an alternative workplace due to severe weather conditions then home working may be an option. This should be agreed with the line manager and attendance and a work schedule agreed and recorded.
- Flexi-leave/annual leave Where appropriate, flexi-leave and/or annual leave can be requested if an individual does not wish to remain available for work.

What happens if adverse weather conditions occur during the day?

Whilst the Council's overall presumption will be to keep establishments/services open, line managers may permit employees to leave early (in Education Resource cognisance must be taken of the safety and welfare of children). Heads of establishment/managers should, when considering early closures, give priority, if possible, to those employees most likely to have difficulty in travelling home in a `reasonable time`, taking account of distance to home and modes of transport used and available.

What advice can be given to those employees required to remain at work in the circumstances and who are then unable to return home?

It is recognised that last year a number of employees did remain at their place of work overnight to look after children who could not return home due to the extreme weather conditions and this again is acknowledged and appreciated.

The Executive Director may authorise reasonable accommodation expenses once he is satisfied of the necessity of the requirement and the lack of any suitable alternativ



Appendix C

Education Resources
Executive Director **Larry Forde**

Road/car parks/grit bins

What are the arrangements for gritting roads?

The Council has increased its levels of salt stocks and invested in new modernised snow clearing facilities to keep main carriageways open. The first priority for gritting is always main carriageways, trunk roads with secondary routes being treated thereafter.

What are the arrangements for gritting school grounds?

Additional supplies of salt have been purchased by Community Resources for use in school grounds. An `Adverse Weather Action Plan` has been prepared for the school that shows what area will be cleared to create a pedestrian route from the gate into the school building. It should be noted that the Council cannot guarantee that school car parks will be cleared as a priority but as part of a pilot the Council has agreed to grit the drop of area. In the event that the Head Teacher considers it necessary the school gates to the Car Park will be closed. The main pedestrian gate will remain open.

School transport arrangements

What is the advice for school transport arrangements?

- Establishments have as part of their contingency plan, contact details for transport providers and a list showing the names of pupils who travel on specific buses.
- Alternative pick up and drop off arrangements may be put in place if access is restricted because of adverse weather.
- All school transport contractors have been notified of the primary gritting routes within South Lanarkshire and are advised to travel on these routes whenever possible.

Trips and visits

- Consideration of any groups on visits, residential trips, outdoor learning, activities and/or pupils out on work experience, placement etc when adverse weather begins.
- Consideration of whether any visits, residential trips, outdoor learning activities, and/or work experience, placements etc are planned to take place during period(s) when weather forecasts are predicting snow or icy conditions.

This position statement was drawn up in consultation with the parents, pupils and staff. It was last updated in March 2015