



STEP Academy Trust

Adverse Weather Policy

Date of Policy: January 2019

Review: October 2021

Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

Context

It is the policy of the Academy to make every effort to remain open whenever possible. Headteachers are responsible for making the decision about whether an academy closes.

If the Academy is anticipating closure either at the beginning of the Academy day or during the Academy day, the Headteacher will consult with the Executive Head/Lead before any decision to close the Academy is communicated. The Academy may be closed if insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the Academy running safely. The decision to close might also be taken where conditions on site or on the surrounding and approach roads are dangerous, or where weather conditions are advised to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

If it is anticipated that the Academy will be closed for a significant period of time, then teachers will set work to be completed by pupils at home.

Procedures

The Health and Safety of children, parents and staff are paramount when making any decision.

If the Academy is to close:

- Staff will be informed by text message.
- Breakfast Club staff and Academy meal providers will be included in the above.
- Families will be informed via e-mail or by text message through our Parentmail service. The closure will be made clear on our Academy website.
- School closure will be announced via the media – BBC London news, BBC Sussex and Heart FM (Sussex).
- Closure signs will be displayed at the entrance to the Academy.

The text messaging service is accessible through the internet; therefore, if admin staff are unable to get to their place of work, messages can be sent from alternative locations, e.g. from home.

The Academy will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation with the Academy during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents.

Parents are asked not to call the school to check its status as it may not be possible for staff to answer the telephone. Please tune in to BBC London, BBC Sussex, Heart FM (Sussex), check our school website and check your phones for texts/emails for details of any closure.

Safety in the School Buildings

In snow, ice and wet weather, the main walkways within school may become wet and slippery and in such circumstances:

- All staff should encourage students to walk in a 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.

Parental Responsibility and Absence Reporting

If parents have a reasonable expectation that the adverse weather conditions might cause the Academy to be closed they should contact the Academy before setting out, even if that creates a slight delay in arrival. The Academy appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the Academy to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

The Academy recognises there will be isolated instances where families are cut off, even when the clear majority of children can get into the Academy. In such instances parents should inform the Academy of the circumstances of this exceptional situation, as the Academy has a duty to clarify the circumstances of each case so as to be able to formally authorise the absence to the Local Authority. Parents acting on the assumption that the Academy would be closed without gaining confirmation, or failing to inform the Academy of the circumstance that prevents the child coming into the Academy risks their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

Where the Academy is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

Closure during the Academy Day

In the event of the Academy having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child/ren.

Children will be supervised until a parent/carer is able to collect them. The Academy will remain open until the end of the school day. However, if parents/carers are delayed due to the adverse weather conditions they should contact the Academy as soon as possible to give an anticipated arrival time.

An early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances, e.g. extreme weather conditions, failure of heating/water systems.

Snow Clearing and Salted Routes

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted but it will not be possible to grit all paths and parking areas. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

Before and after Academy opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide on the Academy playground.

Where necessary, essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

Warm Weather

In the event of the weather being warmer than usual, parents will be responsible for ensuring the Academy is informed of their children's susceptibility to the sun. In each Academy, the following steps should be put in place:

Access to water - children will be encouraged to drink regularly. Children are given water bottles by the Academy and a fountain can be used to fill their bottles throughout the day. They can re-fill them as necessary and teachers will encourage children to do so.

Access to shade - children are encouraged to bring wide-brimmed hats to school in hot weather to wear outdoors. Reminders will be given to children and parents about this and about wearing tops with sleeves. In the absence of a canopy, children may be encouraged to stay indoors.

Sun cream - parents are reminded that children should have sun cream applied at home before school, as staff cannot apply it. Older children may bring sun-cream to put on themselves at playtime/lunchtime, though they may not share this with others.

Special events and outdoor PE - careful thought will always be given to outdoor events and PE taking place during hot weather. If necessary, events will be cancelled or postponed.

Consideration will also be given to outdoor extra-curricular activities during hot weather and a decision will be made as to whether they should be cancelled.

Uniform - during the summer months, the children may wear shorts or summer dresses. Parents/carers should refer to the individual Academy policy on types of footwear to be worn in all weathers.

APPENDIX

WEATHER AND STAFF/CHILDREN UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Inclement weather will have a bearing on children and staff being able to attend the academy.

LOCATION	IMPACT	ACTION	DECISION	IMPACT	ACTION	DECISION
Snow/ice surrounding streets gritted	1	Where pavements/ streets have been gritted, little risk to children and parents and therefore academy opens.	Headteacher			
Snow/ice surrounding streets not gritted	2	Where pavements/ streets not gritted, an assessment made of children and teacher ability to get in and decision made on the day in question. Website updated if assessment made that attendance is impossible for most.	Headteacher			
Snow/ice school grounds and gritted	1	Where pavements/ streets have been gritted, little risk to children and parents and therefore academy opens.	Headteacher			
Snow/ice school grounds not gritted	3	Where school grounds not gritted, an assessment made of children, staff health and safety. Site Management to create a safe walkway by 8.00a.m and ensure that its safety is monitored throughout the day. Academy remains open.	Headteacher			

Floods surrounding roads	4	<u>Less than five days</u> An assessment is made of children's/staff ability to reach the school as well as their safety in doing so. If safety of children is in doubt, academy closes.	Headteacher	4	<u>Greater than five days:</u> Identify alternative teaching locations for the following: Key stage 2 Key stage 1 Nursery	Headteacher
Hard standing school grounds flooded	3	<u>Less than five days</u> If dry land cannot be created across school grounds, safety of children and staff is assessed. If safety in doubt, academy closes.	Headteacher	4	<u>Greater than five days:</u> Identify alternative teaching locations for the following: Key stage 2 Key stage 1 Nursery	Headteacher
Interior of school flooded	4	<u>Less than five days</u> Academy closes as electricians makes children and staff vulnerable.	Headteacher	4	<u>Greater than five days:</u> Identify alternative teaching locations for the following: Key stage 2 Key stage 1 Nursery	Headteacher