

# Inclement Weather and Emergency Closure Policy

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## Inclement Weather and Related Emergencies

1. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide full-time education for school pupils for 190 days each year. Reducing the pupil year below this figure is permissible only where a closure is unavoidable and it is not reasonably practicable to make up for attendances lost. It is therefore necessary that schools should be kept open wherever possible during spells of severe weather and other emergencies (e.g. breakdown of heating systems, non-delivery of fuel etc.)
2. Points to be borne in mind in deciding whether or not to close a school are:
  - The Local Authority (LA), nor the Manor Hall Academy Trust (MHAT), do not make 'blanket' decisions to close schools. All decisions must be taken on the individual circumstances of the school. It is preferable to close a school for half a day, rather than a whole day, unless this is really not practicable.
  - Where staff are unable to reach school, consideration should be given to combining classes rather than closing it. Every attempt should be made to accommodate children who arrive at school and who are unable to return before the end of the school day.
  - The school should have in place arrangements for deciding on whether or not to close if the Headteacher is not able to reach the school. Neither the LA nor MHAT expect decisions to be taken without an assessment of circumstances at the school. It is also helpful to consult neighbouring establishments so that a co-ordinated response to the situation can be made.
  - The LA and MHAT should be informed and Chair of Governors should be consulted about all closures, unless this is not possible.
  - Decisions to close should normally be for no more than two days and reassessed regularly thereafter.
3. Where the school is closed, it may be appropriate to use local radio as part of the strategy for informing parents. If so, the School's DfES number should be given; this is part of a check on bogus messages.
4. In the event of the school having to close, all employees should be paid normally, regardless of whether they were able to report for duty, unless the Governors believe that individuals did not make reasonable attempts to travel to work and the closure was caused mainly by their non-attendance. The Headteacher should decide whether it is reasonable or necessary to require them to remain on the premises undertaking other duties within their job description. This will depend on:
  - paying due regard to matters relating to health, safety and welfare of employees and pupils;
  - whether or not these duties could be carried out at home;
  - whether staying on the premises would create unreasonable difficulties for the journey home, particularly where conditions are deteriorating.
5. In the case of a school remaining open, where the employee does not report for duty, the Governors have discretion to allow normal pay. In determining whether or not pay is to be allowed, the basic issue should be whether or not the employee has made every reasonable effort to attend school.
6. Advice from weather forecasters and the Police for people to 'stay at home' does not constitute an entitlement to pay for staff who follow this advice.
7. Where the Governors decide to withhold pay because of the employee's absence, they should notify the MAT so that the appropriate deduction can be made. This could involve a deduction for less than the full period of absence, if they believe that some of it was justified.
8. Governors are advised not to consider disciplinary action against staff who are absent because of inclement weather.



## Inclement Weather and Emergency Closure Policy

### Local Arrangements

- To notify staff of school closure the Headteacher will send a message to the Senior Leadership Team, and then the staff who have 'signed-up' to the WhatsApp group.
- The Headteacher will notify the LA through the School Closure section of the SLN
- The Headteacher will contact Signal radio so that the school becomes part of the closure notification.
- Staff who have not signed-up to the WhatsApp group are responsible for finding out whether the school is closed. It is their responsibility to either log on to the SLN, or to hear the information on the radio station.
- The closure will be reported on the School's website, [www.chaselea.co.uk](http://www.chaselea.co.uk).
- Where possible, the Headteacher will make any decisions by 08:00.
- The Headteacher reserves the right to open the school at a later time, 10:50; where it is deemed that the weather is inclement, but the risk to staff and pupils will be removed by opening at the later time.
- The Headteacher will inform MHAT of the school closure.

### Parents

- The Headteacher will send an email (through Arbor) to inform them that the school is closed. It is important that parents keep the school up-to-date with current email addresses.
- Parents can listen to Signal Radio for their list of school closures.
- Parents can visit Staffordshire's website where details of school closures are listed: <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Schoolsandcolleges/emergencyclosures.aspx>

### Emergency Closure During the School Day

- The Headteacher reserves the right to take the decision to close the school during the normal school day due to inclement weather, or other emergency situations.
- Parents will be informed and pupils will not be permitted to leave the building until parental permission is given, or parents arrive to collect their child.
- The Headteacher (and/or delegated staff) will remain on site until all pupils and other staff have left.
- The Headteacher will inform the LA and MHAT that the school has closed.