



## Severe Weather Conditions Policy

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“Learning together; to be the best we can be”

## **Nexus Academy Closure Due To Severe Weather Conditions or Other Circumstances**

### **1. Scope**

- This policy applies to all within Nexus Trust.
- It also applies to all temporary workers, consultants, contractors acting on behalf of an Academy

### **2. Context**

- Nexus Trust is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment and to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff and pupils. In doing so, we will ensure that any disruption to the normal functioning of the trust will remain minimal, whilst not compromising the safety and well-being of all who enter the premises.

### **3. Aims**

- To outline the procedures for the closure of our Trust sites as well as informing staff and pupils should the situation require the cancellation of all classes.
- Circumstances may not dictate a complete closure. For example, a power failure or flood in one area which may result in a partial closure, whereas severe weather may close the entire Trust.
- Please be aware that a closure is a very unlikely event and that unless staff and pupils receive official notification of a closure, they are expected to attend as normal.
- A complete closure will only occur when there is severe disruption to the site where, for reasons of health and safety, it would not be possible to continue normal operations.

### **4. Statutory Position**

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999, to assess the risks to the health and safety of employees and students.

## 5. Policy details

- A decision regarding delayed opening or closure will be made independent of other agencies such as other local academies or schools. Staff and pupils should not assume that if other local academies and schools are closed then Nexus Trust is also closed.

## 6. Criteria to be considered for a closure

To do this a risk assessment will be conducted taking into account a range of factors including:

- Can parents, pupils and staff access the site safely?
- Are pedestrian routes in to the site safe and accessible?
- Can learners and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- In an emergency, can the Emergency Services access the site?
- Have local weather forecasts and road conditions, including those for areas from which staff will be travelling, been considered?
- Are there any Met Office warnings available?
- Can the premises be heated?
- Is there provision of water for sanitary use or drinking?
- Can enough staff attend the Academy to ensure the adequate supervision of pupils?
- Is the weather or incident likely to clear within a short period of time?

## 7. Decision to close

- Any decision on closure will be made by the individual Headteacher, in consultation with the CEO, on a daily basis and will be communicated to staff and pupils through the different mediums below
- The Headteachers, in consultation with the CEO, will endeavour to make a decision at the earliest possible time. If the closure is during the day, members of the Senior Leadership Team should ensure they have an accurate list of contact telephone numbers so that they can cascade any notifications to parents.
- If a situation occurs overnight, a decision will be made as early as possible or by 0700 hours which will be communicated on Academies websites and local radio stations to convey the news as widely as

possible, assuming that we are able to get through to them. Information will also be sent to parents using text messaging systems and Academy websites, and Twitter pages will also carry information.

## **8. Academy Protocol for Closures**

- Please see attached protocol (Appendix 1) which outlines the stages each Academy will follow given the approval to close. This should be placed on the Academy website

## **9. Staff Attendance**

- Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Headteacher, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work.
- Consideration will be given to domestic circumstances, travel arrangements and the safety of staff. Contract and agency staff, if appropriate, also need to be advised of any emergency requirements.
- It is recommended that a decision to close the Academy is made as early as possible, in order to inform parents/carers. Once the decision to close the Academy has been taken, this needs to be communicated quickly and efficiently to the Academy community ie. Governors, staff, parents/carers and pupils.

## **10. Accountability**

- Academy Headteachers hold delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all Trust policies.
- Academy Headteachers should inform the CEO of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be addressed under this code of conduct promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

## **11. Policy Status**

- This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. The Trust may alter or adapt this policy, and any components of it, at any time provided it notifies the Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.
- Its impact and effectiveness will be judged in terms of the positive benefits and any negative consequences arising from its implementation

## **13. Dissemination**

- All policies that need to be conveyed to pupils, staff and families will be available on the Academy's website.
- Staff will be informed about policies during induction and through on-going in-service training.

## Appendix 1

### Academy Closure Protocol Due To Severe Weather Conditions or Other Circumstances

It is the policy of Nexus to ensure that their Academies make every effort to remain open whenever possible, regardless of the weather. A decision to close an Academy during the school day will be made by the Headteacher and will generally only be made if it is felt that this is the best way to ensure that pupils can return home safely.

Emergency closure will only occur in exceptional circumstance:

- Where there is a loss of essential services to the Academy which cannot be compensation by alternative provision
- Where there are severe weather conditions adversely affecting the access to the Academy

Academies will make all practicable efforts to keep parents informed as to the situation during adverse weather conditions, as we appreciate that such conditions and the uncertainty places very considerable difficulties upon parents. However, parents are expected to check the website and/or make themselves aware of the radio broadcasts when it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

During bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact their Academy to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

All parents and staff will be sent a message advising of the closure, to the mobile number provided on your records. It is therefore important that you notify the Academy office whenever your phone number changes.

Should a parent not be able to be contacted or a student cannot be picked up by parent/carer, additional contacts provided by parents for collection purposes throughout the year will be used as the next means of communication.

Parents are requested not to contact the Academy to enquire about closure as this will block the telephone lines which may be needed.

All pupils must be aware of what arrangements you are likely to put in place in the event of closing due to bad weather. We would need as many parents as possible to

collect their children personally since public transport and travel in general may be disrupted in the event of serious bad weather.

Where we believe there are likely to be problems with driving conditions and public transport, we will use local radio stations to convey the news as widely as possible, assuming that we are able to get through to them. Information will also be sent to parents using text messaging systems and Academy websites, and Twitter pages will also carry information.

The Headteacher will ensure that there is adequate staffing in place until all pupils have been safely collected. The Headteacher will determine this at the time as this will be dependent on pupil numbers and weather conditions at that time.

### **Poor weather conditions overnight**

A decision not to open the Academy will usually be made by 07:00 hours. Information will be sent to parents using text messaging systems and our website and social media accounts will also carry information.

The website will be the most important method of informing parents of the current situation. There will be a clear message on the front page to inform you if the school will be closed. Use will be made of local radio stations, although it is not guaranteed that the school will manage to get through

### **You should presume the Academy is open if there are no announcements via the above method**