

Aspirational Futures Multi Academy Trust



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Adverse Weather Policy

Aspirational Futures Multi Academy Trust Wide Policy

October 2024

Document Control

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The trust's commitment to health and safety

Aspirational Futures Multi Academy Trust is committed to providing pupils, staff and all stakeholders with a safe place to be. We will take the necessary measures to adhere to our statutory duty to protect people from harm. We also value pupils' learning and want to ensure any severe weather causes minimal disruption to pupils' routines. As such, we have put this plan in place to ensure the schools remain open during adverse weather conditions.

This plan clearly outlines to members of each school community how their school is prepared in the event of adverse weather to ensure everyone remains safe, and the measures we will implement to ensure the continuity of pupils' education.

1. Legal framework

This plan has been created in line with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

This plan has been created in line with the following school policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Trips and Visits Policy
- Business Continuity Plan

2. Adverse weather

The headteacher will be responsible for tracking weather forecasts and weather warnings.

If the Met Office releases a weather warning, the headteacher will assess the severity of it and initiate this plan where necessary.

The headteacher will access weather warning information by using the Met Office's website.

The headteacher will be responsible for monitoring traffic reports and taking action where relevant.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils' learning is not affected by adverse weather. Cost will not be a factor for the school to avoid taking reasonable steps unless the cost is disproportionately expensive.

Low temperatures, snow and ice

The indoor temperature of the school will be reasonable. "Reasonable" is any temperature between 18° C - 22 °C.

If the average temperature falls below what is reasonable, we will implement additional control measures to bring the temperatures back to reasonable limits.

Portable heaters and additional insulative measures, e.g. blinds and windows being closed, will be used to get the temperature back to a reasonable limit.

The site manager/supervisor will carry out a risk assessment before using portable heaters.

The following control measures will be implemented when using portable heaters:

- The heaters will not be left unattended whilst switched on
- The heaters will be located near a plug so there is less risk of people tripping up over the wire
- The heater will remain stationary when in use
- The heater will not be used to dry things
- Only staff can use the heater

The site manager/supervisor will place warning signs where floors have become icy or slippery.

All access routes will be cleared and gritted, wherever possible.

Parents will be informed about any restricted access to the school site.

The site manager/supervisor will assess the condition of outdoor play areas and ensure they are safe to use. If they are unsafe, the site manager/supervisor will close off the area.

Non-slip mats will be placed on hard floors to avoid accidents.

The headteacher will assess the outdoor temperature and if it is below 10 °C then pupils may be advised to stay indoors for break time and lunchtime.

Hot weather

Hot weather can cause people to become dehydrated, dizzy or lightheaded. In more severe cases, this can lead to heat cramps, fitting, heatstroke or collapse. To prevent this, we will take reasonable steps to try and ensure that the school remains at a comfortable temperature at all times. In severe circumstances the school will do their utmost to use the rooms adequately ventilated on a rota system to avoid teaching staff and pupils from being constantly affected by heat. Portable and/or fixed fans will be available to staff on request.

The schools have both natural and some artificial ventilation systems in place which are serviced termly by the site manager/supervisor.

Most windows have blinds that can be closed fully to allow for shade to be created, where necessary.

Electric fans will be used, where necessary, to regulate the temperature of rooms where natural ventilation is either not in place or is insufficient.

Pupils will be informed to keep away from air conditioning units and fans when they are in use by staff members.

Windows will be installed with a reflective film where possible to reduce the amount of heat absorbed through the window.

There may be a relaxed dress code where outdoor temperatures exceed 22 °C. This is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Lessons and activities will be adapted where necessary to ensure pupils or staff are not overexerted.

The headteacher will advise parents to ensure their children are suitably equipped for the hot weather. This includes wearing sunscreen, hats and sunglasses.

Water will be freely available and staff will ensure pupils remain hydrated throughout the day.

Wind and rain

The headteacher and site manager/supervisor will assess the forecast and any weather warnings and ensure the school site is secure before pupils enter the school.

The site manager/supervisor will ensure any items that are not secured to the ground are secure or brought inside, e.g. basketball hoops.

Pupils may be advised to refrain from going outside during break and lunchtimes during extreme wind and rain.

The site manager/supervisor will ensure the school buildings are in good repair before and after extreme wind and rain.

Parents will be informed of any risk of flooding surrounding the school grounds.

The school playing fields will be out of bounds during extreme wind and rain.

Pupils should wear waterproof coats at all times when outside during wind and rain.

3. Minimising disruption to education

We will adhere to our duty of care by ensuring the school remains safe and secure during times of adverse weather.

We will implement this plan in line with the Business Continuity Plan.

The headteacher and site manager/supervisor will carry out necessary risk assessments for ensuring it is safe for the school to remain open during adverse weather.

The site manager/supervisor will assess the school site and inform the headteacher at 7.00am of the state of the site to help inform decision making.

The decision to close the school lies with the headteacher; however, this is deemed as a last resort and the school will take all reasonable steps to ensure continuity of education.

Access roads and pathways will be cleared and (where relevant) gritted by the site team. The condition of all access routes will be reported back to the headteacher and if they are impassable, the school may have to close.

If the weather makes it difficult for staff to come into work, they will contact the headteacher to explain the situation.

Staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to get into work without risking their safety.

Parents who are unable to get their child to school must contact the school office and explain the situation.

Parents must make all reasonable efforts to get their child to school if it remains open without risking their safety.

For any pupil who cannot come into school but is scheduled to take an exam, we will liaise with the awarding body and organise alternative arrangements.

Where the school site is damaged due to adverse weather, the following plan will be implemented to ensure the school can remain open.

Loss of property	
Disruption	Response
Complete loss of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements will be made between other local schools where there is capacity to accommodate additional pupils. • Off-site activities, e.g. physical activities and school trips, will be arranged.
Partial loss of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher will arrange the use of alternative on-site buildings. • The headteacher will liaise with neighbouring schools and the LA to arrange the use of off-site facilities, if available.
Temporary loss of the premises (e.g. utility failure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual learning and off-site activities, e.g. physical activities and school trips, will be arranged.

Where the loss of property presents a risk to the school community, the school will consider closing.

Where staff are unable to attend work due to adverse weather, or services have been damaged making it difficult to do their normal job, the following plan will be implemented.

Loss of workforce or services	
Disruption	Response
Loss of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative teaching arrangements are made. • Temporary staff are called upon. • Staff substitute for absent colleagues. • Pre-prepared teaching materials and cover work are used. • Non-critical activities are suspended and rearranged for a later date. • Where possible, classes are merged on a temporary basis. • The headteacher implements any mutual support agreements made with other schools. • The headteacher will consider school closure as a last resort if a substantial number of staff are unable to attend.
Failure of ICT systems and loss of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff rely on back-up paper systems. • The school uses the back-up server. • The school has a list of disaster recovery contacts they connect with if there is a risk of data loss or system failure. • The school backs up data on a secure external network. • Any data breach is reported to the ICO, within 72 hours, where necessary. • Data subjects are notified where necessary.

Loss of gas and electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site manager/supervisor distributes additional portable heaters in classrooms and communal areas. • The site manager/supervisor communicates with the school's suppliers for information on when services will be working, how long the delays may be and any recommendations they have for the school. • The headteacher/SBM liaises with insurance providers. • Mutual support agreements with other schools are implemented. • If loss of gas or electricity is significant and will not be recovered for an extended period of time, the headteacher considers closing the school.
Loss of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site manager/supervisor communicates with the school's suppliers for information. • The headteacher/SBM liaises with insurance providers. • Mutual support agreements with other schools are implemented. • If water loss is significant and will not be recovered for an extended period of time, the headteacher will consider closing the school.

We will also instigate the following **initial response plan** in the event of any adverse weather, in line with the Business Continuity Plan, to ensure the school can remain open and disruption to education can be minimised.

Initial response

Requirement	Action to take
Assess the severity of the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The situation. – The impact on pupils and staff. – The scale, severity, duration and impact of the situation. • Disseminate information to staff and necessary stakeholders. • Call the emergency services if necessary. • Evacuate the school building if necessary – this must be a last resort.
Nominate individuals to carry out essential roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate tasks amongst the SLT, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Business continuity – Communications – Log-keeping – Media management – Resources – Welfare • Ensure staff are clear about their responsibilities. • Establish the location and frequency of meetings to discuss updates to the situation.
Inform all other staff of the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the coordinating response team. • Contact the operational response team. • Inform all other staff and governors as appropriate.

Consider how the situation affects extended services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liaise with extended services as necessary. ● Inform parents if there is any change in schedule via the school electronic communication system.
Maintain a log of any injuries sustained to pupils, staff or visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the log is kept up-to-date and stored in the office. ● Provide the log to the emergency services where required.
Contact parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the school electronic communication system to keep in contact with parents. ● Ensure parents are contacted if the school has to be closed early or for the full day. ● Ensure after a period of closure, parents are made aware of the school reopening.
Account for absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure registers are taken of staff and pupils during adverse weather. ● Ensure there are suitable phone lines open to take calls for absence in the school office. ● Mark any pupil absence occurring as a result of adverse weather should be marked in the register as 'Y'. ● Consider setting the phone to 'answer only' mode ● Use the answerphone message to report on the state of the school, whether it remains open, safe access routes and how parents will be informed if the school has to close.
Establish arrangements to meet the needs of pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify pupils who may require additional support in adverse weather and ensure provisions are in place to assist them where necessary ● Pupils who may need additional help include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Those with SEND. – Those with other medical needs. – Those with personal emergency evacuation plans.
In the event of the school closing, develop a brief media statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The headteacher should report on the school closure on the school website and/or social media pages to help inform parents. ● A statement on the school's opening should be made after a period of closure.

4. Communication procedure

The headteacher will keep parents up-to-date with the condition of the school via the school electronic communication system and methods outlined in section 3 of this plan.

The headteacher will release a statement on the school website and on social media regarding the school's condition and whether it remains open.

Staff are aware that they should contact the school office if they are unable to attend school due to adverse weather.

The headteacher will send a message to all staff to communicate the condition of the school to them.

If there is no news on the school website, social media or local media, staff, parents and other stakeholders should assume this means the school remains open with no problems.

5. Necessary closures

We will consider closing the school as a last resort – this decision will be made by the headteacher.

We will not jeopardise the safety and security of our staff or pupils and will close the school if keeping it open would put our school community at risk.

If the school needs to be closed, we will follow the procedure outlined in this plan and the procedures in our Business Continuity Plan.

If the weather conditions rapidly deteriorate during the school day, the headteacher will assess the safety of the site and contact parents if pupils need to be collected early.

The site manager and headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the school has been evacuated and the site is secure in the event of the early closure of the school.