

Safety Information Guidance Notes

SIGN 12

Adverse Weather Procedures



Cumbria Schools Safety Information Guidance Notes

Cumbria Schools Safety Information Guidance Notes support Cumbria County Council's Health and Safety Policy and Corporate Safety Procedures. They have been prepared specifically for use by Local Authority maintained schools by Cumbria County Council's Health and Safety Team to help School Management Teams interpret relevant safety legislation, follow good practice, and establish and implement suitable health and safety management arrangements in school and for school activities.

Schools must have their own current Health and Safety Policy in place. A template model policy document is provided for schools to tailor via the Schools' Portal. The Safety Information Guidance Notes cover a wide range of general health and safety topics that would apply to all schools.

Health and Safety advice and guidance is, as always, provided free of charge to all LA maintained schools.

Please contact the team for advice either by e-mail healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk or by telephone **01228 221616**.

Full contact details for the Health and Safety Team can be found in the health and safety reference library of the Schools' Portal.

Document No: 12

Revision: 03

Author: Corporate Health and Safety Team

Approval Chain: Health and Safety Practitioners, Schools Health and Safety Committee

Date: February 2021

Review Date: February 2023

AMENDMENT RECORD

Version	Date	Description
01	Unknown	Original procedure
02	01.05.2019	Reviewed to new format including updating contact details and inserting links to various existing documents and trusted websites
03	21.06.2020	Review to remove any duplication of advice and include links to existing documentation available elsewhere on the Schools' Portal
04	February 2021	Review to remove any duplication of advice and include links to existing documentation available elsewhere on the Schools' Portal

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Introduction

Adverse weather means wet weather and/or abnormal climatic conditions including, but not limited to, snow, hail, cold, high winds, severe dust storms, extreme high temperatures or any combination of those.

School closures can be disruptive for a pupil's education and create difficulties for working parents. Schools themselves can also be affected when neighbouring schools close, as this can impact on their own staffing levels if staff have children in those schools. You should therefore aim to keep your school open for as many children as possible during inclement weather conditions such as those identified above.

It is essential that headteachers and governing bodies determine their own arrangements in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff in the event of severe, inclement weather conditions and that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather. These arrangements should be documented within the school Health and Safety Policy.

Emergency planning

All schools must have in place an emergency plan to help staff respond effectively to an emergency at school or on an educational visit. The plan should be generic enough to cover a range of potential incidents that could occur, including planning for adverse weather. During severe weather conditions, such as flooding or snow, you should aim to keep your school or early years setting open for as many children as possible. For further advice on Closures Advice for Schools, see the Schools' Portal at: [Closures advice for schools October 2021](#)

Closures on subsequent days

It is essential that the decision on whether or not to open on subsequent days is reached and communicated to staff and parents/carers and other interested parties as soon as possible. If forecasts make it very likely that a school will not be able to open the next day, then a decision the previous afternoon may be appropriate. The local radio stations play a large part in keeping parents informed, but it is also good practice to have up-to-date information available on the school website if possible.

Disruption of exams or other assessments

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted. See JCQ notice to centres '[Preparing for disruption to examinations](#)'

Temperatures in school buildings

The School Premises (England) Regulations (2012), which replace the 1999 regulations, are less prescriptive and have fewer regulations. They no longer identify minimum temperatures but refer back to the [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#), which state that the temperature in a workplace should normally be at least 16°C or 13°C where the work involves rigorous physical effort.

The temperature must be suitable for the pupils attending the premises, however, having regard to their ages, numbers and any special requirements they may have. A pupil has 'special requirements' if the pupil has any needs arising from physical, medical, sensory, learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties which require provision which is additional to or different from that generally required by children of the same age in schools other than special schools.

Where temperatures fall below the minimum requirement, then staff/pupils should be removed from the area or temporary heating provided. Electric convectors are preferred provided there are sufficient electrical circuits and can be fixed down where possible.

Schools must ensure that their heating systems are regularly serviced and that sufficient stocks of fuel are held where necessary. If your water supply becomes frozen you should immediately arrange for a plumber to visit, or if appropriate contact CCC Building Maintenance helpline on 01228 221106. There will be an automated message on this line on an evening/weekend advising the caller of out-of-hours arrangements.

Clearing snow and ice from public spaces

Click on this link for guidance on clearing snow and ice from paths and cycle ways:

<https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

High winds

High winds can cause damage to premises, the building and the grounds, and in some instances can cause injuries to staff, pupils, and/or members of the public, but there are precautions that can be taken to reduce the risks. [See Appendix 1: Adverse Weather Model Risk Assessment.](#)

Please be aware that many contractors may be unable to carry out remedial or repair works until the weather has improved.

Heatwaves

¹A UK heatwave is met when a location records a period of at least 3 consecutive days with a maximum temperature meeting or exceeding a heatwave temperature threshold. For Northern England, most of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the threshold value is 25°C. Therefore if the temperature reaches 28°C for at least 3 consecutive days in the areas stated, this would constitute a heatwave.

High temperatures affect people of all age groups, and climate change is likely to lead to an increase in heatwaves throughout the UK. Temperatures both outdoors and indoors may rise to such an extent that precautions to prevent children suffering from heat stress or heat exhaustion may need to be taken. Public Health England, the NHS and Cancer UK have all produced guidance on what to do in the event of a heatwave and sun safety – see links below.

¹ [Royal Meteorological Society](#)

References and related documents

www.metoffice.gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves; guidance for teachers and professionals - Public Health England

Beat the Heat poster - Public Health England

How to cope in hot weather - NHS UK

Sun protection policy guidelines for nurseries and pre-schools - Cancer Research UK

Sun protection policy guidelines for primary schools - Cancer Research UK

Sun protection policy guidelines for secondary schools – Cancer Research UK

Further information on the above is available from the Corporate Health and Safety Team, tel. 01228 221616.

Auditing, compliance and measuring performance

Compliance with this procedure will be audited in LA maintained schools by the Corporate Health and Safety Team as part of its three year rolling health and safety management audit programme.

Any personal data the council holds will be kept in accordance with the six principles of the GDPR and in line with the council's Retention and Disposal Schedule. For further details please refer to the Council Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 1 - Model Risk Assessment

Word template in Adverse Weather folder of Schools' Portal

RA Reference	CCC model risk assessment (amend to your ref) <i>Enter your RA reference</i>		Activity description	Adverse weather conditions	
Assessment date	<i>Enter date</i>		Assessor name	<i>Headteacher/delegated lead</i>	
Assessment team members	<i>List contributors to RA</i>		Review date	<i>Enter date</i>	
Location	<i>Name of school</i>		Number of people exposed	<i>Enter no. exposed</i>	
Overall Residual Risk Level following implementation of effective control measures	<i>Enter your overall Residual Risk Rating, e.g. Medium risk</i>		People exposed	All employees Service users/pupils Visitors Members of the public Vulnerable children/adults Persons with pre-existing medical conditions First aiders New/expectant mothers Contractors	
Date record created			Is this an acceptable risk?	<i>Choose an item.</i>	
Hazard description and how people are at risk	Potential risk	Current control measures	Additional control measures		Residual Risk
					By whom and when

Damage to property and injury to people due to excessive rain/flooding	Medium	Weather conditions will be monitored to anticipate adverse weather Suitable maintenance of building and site to ensure drains and rainwater goods are not blocked	Refer to the following: Cumbria CC severe weather guidance Closure advice for schools – Schools’ Portal Bad weather guidance - HR CCC intranet pages - Winter Ready	Low	
Disruption to school day for staff and pupils due to ice/snow	Medium	School emergency plans in place in respect of adverse weather	Estimate how many staff members need to get into school for it to operate safely, to deliver the normal curriculum	Medium	
		Cascade system in place for reporting emergency closures. Monitor road closures via Highways England Headteacher will check CCC website for Gritting maps			

<p>Injury to staff, pupils, visitors caused by slips and trips on ice/snow</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Weather conditions will be monitored to anticipate adverse weather.</p> <p>An adequate supply of rock salt/grit is purchased in advance of the winter months and maintained throughout the winter period.</p>	<p>Suitable PPE and equipment is provided to staff responsible for treating access areas. Staff undertaking the task have received manual handling training to make them aware of the safe ways to lift/work and follow the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Snow clearing from paths and cycle ways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A main entrance or entrances are identified which take priority for salting first thing in the morning. • Where possible areas that are not gritted will be closed off. • Parents/carers are notified in advance of the walkways which will be gritted first and which way they must use to safely access the school premises. • Any accidents or incidents will be investigated to identify improvements or issues with our procedures. 	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>Injury to persons/damage to property and vehicles due to falling trees or branches in high winds</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Annual tree surveys will be carried out, remedial works identified will be undertaken by a competent person.</p> <p>Visual monitoring of the condition of trees will be carried out regularly, particularly after windy weather with any damage reported and rectified.</p>	<p>If a tree does appear to have suffered damage due to high winds then the area must be kept clear of all people and vehicles, allowing for the full span/height of the tree, and a suitable contractor contacted to inspect the tree as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Low</p>	

Injury to persons/damage to property due to unsafe scaffolding	Medium	<p>Any construction work will have an appropriate construction phase plan in place.</p> <p>Scaffolding will be erected by a competent contractor.</p> <p>Scaffolding will be inspected and used safely by a competent contractor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors will be responsible for ensuring access is prevented to unauthorised persons. Scaffolding will be routinely checked by the contractor at the beginning and end of each working day. School staff will report any concerns in relation to a contractor/worksite to the headteacher to enable effective action to be taken. 	Medium	
Injury to persons/damage to property due to flying objects and unsecured wheelie bins	Medium	Wheelie bins and recycle bins are sited at least 8m from the building and are secured and locked shut.	Any item that is identified as freestanding (litter bins, benches etc.) will be fastened down or removed during high winds.	Low	
Injury to persons/damage to property due to falling masonry	Medium	<p>The building will be maintained in a safe wind and watertight condition.</p> <p>Boundary walls/fences will be maintained in good condition.</p> <p>Temporary fencing will be adequately secured.</p> <p>Any unsafe areas will be cordoned off and access prevented until repairs can be undertaken.</p>	Where the area is above a fire exit door, alternative fire escape routes must be allocated and details communicated to staff.	Low	
Injuries and damage due to unsecured open doors.	Medium	Exterior doors that require holding open will be secured by suitable methods to prevent them blowing shut in high winds.	Doors will be inspected on a monthly basis and any faults reported and records kept.	Medium	

<p>Injuries and ill health due to excessive temperatures, e.g. sun burn, heat exhaustion or dehydration</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Weather conditions will be monitored to anticipate adverse weather.</p> <p>Sun protection policy guidance will be followed.</p> <p>Suitable clothing and headwear will be encouraged.</p> <p>Provision of drinking water available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun protection policy guidelines for nurseries and pre-schools – Cancer Research UK • Sun protection policy guidelines for Primary Schools – Cancer Research UK • Sun protection policy guidelines for Secondary Schools – Cancer Research UK • Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves – Public Health England 	<p>Low</p>	
		<p>Information and guidance promoted to staff, pupils and parents/carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to cope in hot weather - NHS UK • Beat the Heat Poster - Public Health England • www.sunsmart.org.uk – Cancer Research UK 		
<p>Assessment Conclusion</p>	<p>Providing the stated control measures are implemented and adhered to, the risk can reduce to a manageable level in normal circumstances. Compliance with this risk assessment should be monitored and reviewed to ensure control measures remain effective.</p>				

<p>To be completed by the individual undertaking the risk assessment:</p>	
<p>Name:</p>	<p>Job title:</p>
<p>Signature:</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

To be completed by the headteacher:

I consider this risk assessment to be suitable and sufficient to control the risks to the health and safety of both employees undertaking the tasks involved and any other person who may be affected by the activities.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

		Severity				
		1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Most severe
Likelihood	5 Very Likely	5 Low Risk	10 Medium Risk	15 High Risk	20 High Risk	25 High Risk
	4 Likely	4 Low Risk	8 Medium Risk	12 Medium Risk	16 High Risk	20 High Risk

	3 Possible	3 Low Risk	6 Medium Risk	9 Medium Risk	12 Medium Risk	15 High Risk
	2 Unlikely	2 Low Risk	4 Low Risk	6 Medium Risk	8 Medium Risk	10 Medium Risk
	1 Very Unlikely	1 Low Risk	2 Low Risk	3 Low Risk	4 Low Risk	5 Low Risk