

WEST PARK ACADEMY

Strategy for Adverse Weather Conditions



It is the strategy of West Park Academy to make every effort to remain open whenever possible.

The decision to close the academy either before or during the academy day will be made by the Principal. The academy will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the academy running safely.
2. Conditions on site are dangerous
3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel.

If the academy is to close:

1. The closure will be recorded on our [Website](#) by 7.00 am.

This information will be displayed to the public via the public alerts page on the [Darlington Borough Council website](#)

The local radio stations (BBC Radio Tees, TFM and Capital Radio) will then broadcast details.

2. Parents who have opted into the scheme will be alerted to the closure via our texting service.

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.

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.

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 where the clear majority of children can get into 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 circumstances that prevents the child coming into academy risks their child being registered as an unauthorised absence.

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

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. Such an early release will only be contemplated in very extreme circumstances.

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. 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.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt wide pathways as follows:

- A) from the front gate to the main entrance
- B) from the front gate to the Foundation Stage entrance
- C) from the front gate to the rear playground and entrance doors.

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

On academy days where the academy is closed to pupils, the pathway will still be maintained during snow and ice weather on a daily basis by the caretaker, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent build-up of ice and snow.

If the yard is closed off during significant adverse weather conditions, pupils should enter the school via the main entrance from 8.40 am and go straight to their classroom.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to parents and children at the beginning and end of the academy day, and if the Principal decides it necessary, at break times as well.

In the Principal's absence the Deputy Principal or a member of the senior leadership team will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Strategy.

Guidance for External Trips:

Prior to an external visit, the weather forecast must be consulted and a decision made as to whether it is considered unsafe to go ahead with the trip as planned.

When travelling by coach or minibus, appropriate clothing for the weather is carried with the passengers inside the vehicle overhead spaces and not in the external luggage hold as this places persons at risk should they need to rummage about while stopped on the motorway hard shoulder following a breakdown.