



The Societas Trust: Primary Academy

Academy Closure Procedure 2020

Procedure – Inclement Weather and Other Emergencies

The Trust Board consulted and agreed this procedure on 15 October 2020, which puts in place a robust process so that parents and staff, as well as the general public and the Trust, understand why and when the academy has to close.

- (a) When the academy has to close for an unexpected reason, that decision is made by the Headteacher or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Headteacher. The following need to be informed:
 - (i) the CEO;
 - (ii) the Chair of the Local Governing Board;
 - (iii) the Stoke on Trent City or Staffordshire County Council Emergency School Closure website;
 - (iv) parents/carers (this will be via the website and local radio stations);
 - (v) staff, using the Stoke on Trent city or Staffordshire County Council website and/or text messaging service.
- (b) The decision to close a school is the responsibility of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The prime concern is the well-being and safety of pupils and staff.
- (c) When the academy is in session and affected by poor weather conditions, the key question is whether pupils would be safer leaving early. Consideration is given to the age of the pupils and, for younger pupils, whether parents will be at home. For pupils who can walk between school and home, it is perhaps safer to close at the normal time but to leave the responsibility with the parent to collect their own child earlier, if they wish to do so. For pupils using public transport or a school bus, then advice should be sought from the company and, if pupils are to be released earlier, parents need to be informed.
- (d) When, because of weather conditions, the question arises about closing the school rather than normal opening, the following procedure is in place:
 - (i) the decision is made by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Consideration is based on the condition of the site and the surrounding area and the supervision of pupils when on site. In order to assess the latter, each academy has a procedure whereby staff can inform the Headteacher of any difficulties in getting to work on time; Staff must ensure that Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have an up-to-date mobile telephone number for use in such circumstances where one is available.

- (ii) if the Headteacher decides to close the academy, the people designated in (a) are to be informed. The academy will be open unless it states the opposite on the website or radio. (There will be less difficulty in communicating with Radio Stoke/Signal Radio, if schools do not try to announce that they will be open);

Parents are asked not to ring the academy to check if school is open until after 9.15am to allow staff to communicate via the phone and text messaging service. We also suggest that, if possible, parents accompany their child to school and check if it is open before leaving them.

- (e) In the event of the academy having to close, all employees will 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 will 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.
- (i) 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.
- (ii) Advice from weather forecasters and the Police for people to 'stay at home' does not constitute an entitlement to pay for staff that follow this advice.
- (iii) Where the Governors decide to withhold pay because of the employee's absence, the academy should notify Payroll 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.
- (iv) Governors are advised not to consider disciplinary action against staff who are absent because of inclement weather.

(f) Safety of the Academy Site

The Governing Board ensures that procedures are in place to minimise the dangers of slipping on frost, snow and ice in outside areas and on access routes. Pedestrian walkways are clearly marked to encourage visitors, parents and pupils to walk on these "safer" areas. The Site Supervisor keeps abreast

of the latest weather forecasts and ensure that there is a clear path to the entrance points within the academy grounds.

Reviewed & Agreed by the Directors' (Trust) Board on 15 October 2020

Review Date– Autumn 2021