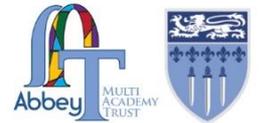




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Executive Principal: Mrs Carol Kitson, BA (Hons) MA  
Principal: Mr Jon Norden, BA (Hons) MA



November 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

### Re: Adverse Weather in Winter – Academy closure and emergency information

The safety of students at the Academy is our primary concern in adverse weather situations and all decisions will be made using this criterion as the priority. We will make every effort to remain open as normal, as working life must go on whenever possible, and it is only when safety is at risk that a judgement to close the Academy will be made.

At Abbey Grange, we are almost entirely dependent on the providers of the buses serving the Academy. The Academy does not have any jurisdiction or authority over the bus providers. However, decisions about closure may be made after consultation with the various agencies that organise the bus service. We have had bad weather arrangements in place for many years; however, it is our experience that as soon as snow arrives, our switchboard becomes jammed with messages and queries from anxious parents. This not only overwhelms our office staff, but also prevents bus companies from being able to get through and update us about any changes to student collection arrangements. We therefore ask you **not** to phone unless it is an emergency, and to work with arrangements set out in this letter.

The following guidelines should be observed in the case of snowfall:

- 1. On Day 1 of snowfall overnight we will try to be open if the health and safety of students and staff is not compromised.** As we are so reliant on the bus service, a decision about closure would need to be made by 7:00am when the first buses leave the depot.
- 2. By 7:00am we will post a notice on our website [www.abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk](http://www.abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk) , on the Children Leeds website, by notice on Radio Leeds and Radio Aire and with a text message to the first emergency contact number supplied to school. **It is therefore, very important that you inform Miss Wood, Attendance Officer, if this telephone number changes.** If that notice has not been read or heard then you should assume that the Academy is open. **Please do not call to ask if the Academy is open; we need to keep lines open for staff to call if they are having travel difficulties.****
- 3. If snow falls during the school day bus companies will make every effort to honour their normal contracts, even if they arrive very late. However, if they have to advise during the day that local roads are about to close, then there is no safe alternative to early closure of the Academy so that both students and staff can get home. Where this happens, as before, we will use the local radio snow lines, our website, and texts to parents to advise you that we have to close, and I and/or senior staff will remain on the premises until the last child has left safely. We will endeavour to get buses to the Academy as quickly as possible and for them to meet students on Butcher Hill.**

Cont...



However, you need to be aware that access to Butcher Hill is particularly difficult for large vehicles in poor conditions and we may need to escort students to meet the buses at the bottom of the hill. If the weather deteriorates rapidly buses may take some time to arrive, or may not arrive at all, and contingency plans may need to be made with your child(ren).

4. If the Academy is to be closed on **Day 2 or 3** then a decision will be made as early as possible so that parents can make arrangements. Notification will be made in the same way as point 1 & 2. Please be aware that one of the particular difficulties with the Abbey Grange site is that car parking and the small playground areas need to be as clear of snow as possible in order to ensure the site is safe and that consideration of this will form part of the decision making process about closure.
5. When considering the point at which to make a decision about closure, we will need to balance the benefits of an early decision (parents having time to plan childcare, avoiding wasted journeys) against the risk of closing and finding next day that there is only a minimal problem. If forecasts make it very likely that there will be heavy snow the next day then a decision the previous evening may be appropriate. Staff too have journeys to make home and very often children at another school or nursery to consider as they plan to get to work or get home. If the Academy closes early, students will be supervised and will not be left unattended, however, parents should be aware, in the interests of safety for all, this supervision may be minimal.
6. If the Academy remains open but conditions are poor, we understand that some students may arrive late because conditions are difficult and we prefer lateness to absence.
7. If travel organisations recommend only essential travel in poor weather then you should be aware that in the Department for Education's view, essential travel includes students going to school to keep learning, and school staff going to work.
8. If roads have been left un-gritted during poor weather conditions the buses may have to re-route and/or stick to main roads which have been gritted. In this event your child needs to know their way to and from the main road and may need to catch a bus from the main road or walk home from there. If you have particular concerns or need to speak directly to the bus company then these are the numbers you should use, but please use them only if essential:

AG42-AG44 & AG48-AG51 provided by Square Peg 0113 8267088 or 0113 2636317

AG41 provided by J&B Travel 0113 2586870

AG45-AG47 provided by CT Plus 0113 2454691

9. All students should have contingency plans in case of closure. These may include:
  - Going to a friend's house if they live nearer to the Academy until parents can safely pick them up.
  - Walk home if necessary – please make sure that the route is known.
  - Pay bus fares if necessary
  - Meet parents at a pre-arranged venue

Thank you for your support with these arrangements and your consideration for all those who work at the Academy, both students and staff. Please be assured that during adverse weather conditions safety is the number one priority and we will do our utmost to minimise the impact on learning.

Yours faithfully



Mr J Norden  
Principal