



# **Procedure for the Unplanned Closure of the Academy**

## **Introduction**

It may be necessary to close the Academy for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather including snow, flooding or storms.
- Accommodation problems, for example, loss of power supply, loss of water supply, heating failures or fire damage.
- Disruption to transport.
- When the health and safety of students and staff is jeopardised.

The decision to close the Academy is taken by the Principal in consultation with the Chief Executive and Chair of Outwood Grange Academies Trust.

The Academy should, however, endeavour to remain open where possible. The Academy contingency plans should be issued to staff, parents/carers and students.

## **Full or Partial Closure of the Academy**

It is essential to ensure the continuity of education of all students where possible and several issues should be considered before deciding to close the Academy:

- Is it absolutely necessary to close the Academy?
- Could the Academy be closed to a proportion of students?
- Is it possible to relocate students to other areas within the Academy?
- Could students be relocated to an area within a neighbouring school?
- Is the problem one that may be resolved relatively quickly?

## **Closure due to Severe Weather**

The decision to close the Academy will normally rest with the Principal, or in their absence, a Vice Principal, and be confirmed by the Chief Executive and Chair of Outwood Grange Academies Trust, or if he is unavailable, the Vice Chair.

The decision should be made where possible prior to 6.30 am. On the grounds of Health and Safety information received from the media about the weather, supplemented by observations of the site conditions, with consideration given to the amount of footfall around the site, either personally or from colleagues better placed to make such observations, and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the Academy are likely to be:

- Access to the Academy, i.e. road conditions (snow, ice, flooding, obstructions etc.)
- Breakdown of the Academy's essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm or fire damage etc).

## **Closure During the Academy Day**

On occasion it may be necessary for the Academy to close during the Academy day i.e. if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether students can safely travel home later in the day. In such cases the Academy needs to ensure that students are collected from the Academy, they have permission to travel home unaccompanied, or students remain on site until they are collected by a parent/carer.

## **Closing Procedure – Academy Responsibilities to Students**

The decision to close the Academy should only be taken as a last resort when no other suitable options are available. Once the decision to close has been made, the following procedure should be followed/observed:

- Students should only be sent home where it is known that parents/carers will be at home to receive them or where the student's capacity to be at home alone has been considered regarding age, ability, etc.
- Where students are accompanied to the Academy, parents/carers should be contacted to collect them. When parents/carers are unable to collect students they should only be sent home where the student's capacity to return home unaccompanied has been considered regarding age, ability, route, etc.
- Academy staff should care for students who are unable to return home until the end of the normal Academy day.
- Where students arrive at the Academy accompanied by a provider of childcare, alone or via taxi and a decision has been taken to close the Academy, it is the Academy's responsibility to contact parents/carers and provide care.

## **Communications**

The Academy will pre-plan how parent/carers will be informed of Academy closures and inform parents/carers where they will be able to obtain the information from.

The process will automatically generate:

- Notification to the following Radio stations:
  - BBC Radio Leeds
  - Radio Aire
  - Ridings FMwho will make announcements and post the information on their websites.
- The Academy website [www.grange.outwood.com](http://www.grange.outwood.com).

The Principal will advise staff through the emergency 'contact tree', members of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust Board, Local Governing Body, and inform parents/carers and students by the Academy's text messaging system.

The other method of communication is the Academy's main switchboard – 01924 303815.

The whole Academy community, including external service providers, contractors and lettings clients should regularly be made aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

Due to the specialist clearing of the footbridge over the A650, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council (WMDC) and the Police will be contacted.

## **Staff Attendance – Academic, Support and Facilities**

The Health and Safety of all our staff is a priority at the Academy. It is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the Principal or Line Manager, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work.

## **Clearance of Snow**

Within the Academy site, the Academy's Premises Team and during occasions of severe snowfall, sub-contractors are responsible for the clearing of the Academy drives, car parks, bus turning circle and all foot paths under the direction of the Facilities Manager and Operations Director.

When severe weather is forecast, the Premises Team will be tasked to lay rock salt as appropriate.

The clearance of public roads is the responsibility of the Highways Department of WMDC.

If there is any question of students' safety being at risk, for instance, if they are out at break or lunch time and the external areas are unsafe, the Academy has a responsibility in inclement weather to keep students indoors.

### **In the event of the Academy being closed**

If the Academy is closed it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the following happens:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair of Outwood Grange Academies Trust.
- The text messaging service is activated.
- The Academy website is updated.
- The staff emergency contact tree is activated.
- Information is passed to the relevant media agencies.
- The Academy main reception answer phone is amended to a short closure message.
- Where the Academy is closed for more than one day, work may be set for certain classes, eg examination groups. Parents/carers and students should check the Academy website.

These tasks do not all have to be completed by the Principal, although the Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring each has been carried out.

### **Reopening Procedure**

It is essential that the decision to re-open the Academy following closure is taken as early as possible in order to ensure that students are not away from education for longer than necessary. Where possible the decision to re-open should be taken the day prior to re-opening, in order to ensure that the re-opening message can be communicated to parents/carers and students.

The Academy will pre-plan how parents/carers will be informed of re-opening, following closure, and inform parents/carers where they will be able to obtain information from about the Academy re-opening. The Academy will use the following:

- The Academy website – [www.grange.outwood.com](http://www.grange.outwood.com)
- The Academy's main switch board – 01924 303815
- Local radio stations – Radio Aire, Ridings FM, BBC Radio Leeds
- Academy's text messaging service.