

Christ the King Bad Weather Policy

Guidance for Parents/Carers in the Case of Bad Weather

It is our policy to **remain open** unless we are forced to close because there is a risk to the health and safety of staff and students.

If we are closed, there will be an announcement on Radio Tees to state this. This situation is highly unlikely and will be avoided where possible. There is no need to contact the school to check whether or not the school is open. Unless announced on the radio station above, **we are open!** While we understand parental concerns, it would be helpful if parents/carers were aware of the difficulty for an office responding to literally hundreds of calls. Please do not telephone the school at these times unless there is an emergency. As well as announcements on radio, any closure details will be posted on our website and may be texted through Parent Mail .

Should the weather turn worse during a school day, students will be allowed to leave school early if collected by an adult.

No students will be allowed to leave school early without permission from the Headteacher and must be accompanied by their parent/carer. If we believe that any student is at risk of being unable to travel home safely, we will contact their parent/carer.

Should any parent/carer wish to make any alternative arrangements for their child they should put these in writing to the Head teacher.

Christ the King R.C primary school covers bad weather conditions in its staff leave of absence policy. It says:

- There may be circumstances when the employee is unable to attend work due to bad weather, but the school remains open as usual; all reasonable effort should be made to attend work
- Alternative arrangements may be agreed with the headteacher, e.g. working from home, or at a different location
- Where this is not possible, non-attendance will normally be treated as unpaid leave, but exceptional circumstances may warrant paid leave
- Staff unable to travel to school must report this by a phone call. Text messages can be used to update the situation
- Staff may be required to report to school even when pupils have been sent home
- Staff may well be asked to undertake appropriate alternative duties to teaching in the event that the pupils are sent home. These duties will be in line with current role duties
- Staff may well be asked to report to their nearest school/other venue if they are unable to make it to school

The Headteacher is able to use his discretion in releasing staff and may allow staff who travel long distances to school to leave early.

This ensures there is a fair and transparent system that operates in line with the local authority's guidelines.

DFE GUIDANCE

Schools should wherever possible stay open in severe weather. They play a key role in their local communities and by staying open help both their pupils and parents. The decision whether to close must, however, be for headteachers as they know their schools and the surrounding areas. They should use common sense in assessing the risks and keep their schools open whenever it is safe to do so.

Schools can improve their planning and readiness for severe winter weather by signing up to the [Met Office's severe weather warning system](#).

Severe weather may mean that some schools are unable to open as planned or that some students are unable to reach their school. Where schools are unable to open they should try to minimise disruption by informing parents, providing as much notice as possible, using their website; ParentMail; local media or other suitable arrangements.

Headteachers should not be worried about the impact that remaining open may have on their attendance statistics. We have in September 2010 amended the relevant regulations so that, when a pupil cannot get in because of severe weather, the school can use attendance code Y, which means that the pupil's absence will not affect the attendance statistics. However, if the headteacher believes that a child could have got to school, then the child should be recorded as code O - an unauthorised absence.

The Department of Health's [cold weather plan](#) for England was launched on 1 November 2011. It is part of the wider suite of measures which the DH and NHS are taking to protect individuals and communities from the effects of severe winter weather. The plan provides advice for individuals, communities and agencies on how to prepare for, and respond to, severe cold weather as part of wider winter planning.