



# Stanley Crook Primary School

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OUR MISSION: TO TRY OUR BEST, TO TELL THE TRUTH, TO LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER AND THE COMMUNITY

*"Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is OUTSTANDING" (Ofsted, 2019)*

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## Adverse Weather Guidance/ Policy

Completed by: Mrs M.Norris

Date Implemented: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

**Stanley Crook Primary School is committed to improving outcomes for all pupils**



SCHOOL  
MEMBER



# 1. Policy Statement

Stanley Crook Primary School is committed to maintaining the safety, welfare and education of pupils while ensuring fair and reasonable treatment of employees during periods of adverse weather. The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open and operate safely whenever possible. Decisions regarding partial or full closure will be based on a robust assessment of risk, staffing capacity, site safety and the ability to safeguard pupils and staff.

The school recognises its responsibilities under health and safety legislation, safeguarding requirements, employment law and Department for Education expectations. Where adverse weather impacts the normal operation of the school, decisions will prioritise the safety of pupils, staff and visitors whilst ensuring continuity of education where practicable.

This policy has been developed with reference to Durham County Council Adverse Weather Guidance (Version 3.8, February 2025), current health and safety legislation, safeguarding requirements, equality duties and Department for Education guidance.

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## 2. Aims and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Maintain the safety of pupils, staff and visitors during periods of adverse weather.
- Provide clear procedures for decision-making during weather-related disruption.
- Ensure fair and consistent treatment of employees affected by adverse weather.
- Minimise disruption to learning and school operations.
- Establish effective communication arrangements with staff, parents, governors and external agencies.
- Support continuation of education through remote or alternative arrangements where appropriate.

This policy applies to all employees, pupils, governors, contractors and visitors.

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## 3. Definition of Adverse Weather

For the purposes of this policy, adverse weather includes, but is not limited to:

- Snow and ice.
- Severe frost.
- Flooding.
- High winds or storms.
- Fog affecting safe travel.
- Extreme heat.
- Severe rainfall.
- Any weather event resulting in safety concerns on site or affecting travel.

Weather conditions will be considered adverse where official agencies, transport operators or emergency services advise that travel poses a significant risk.

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## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

- Monitor weather forecasts and local conditions.
- Undertake or delegate site-specific risk assessments.
- Determine whether the school can operate safely.
- Decide whether the school remains open, operates partially, or closes.
- Ensure Durham County Council closure procedures are completed.
- Ensure communication systems are activated promptly.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions taken.

Where the Headteacher is unavailable, responsibility passes to the Deputy Headteacher. Where decisions affect the Headteacher, references to the Headteacher should be taken to mean the Chair of Governors.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- Approve and review the policy.
- Ensure the school has appropriate emergency and business continuity arrangements.
- Monitor implementation.

### **Staff**

Staff are expected to:

- Make reasonable efforts to attend work safely.
- Notify the school as early as possible if travel difficulties arise.
- Follow reasonable management instructions relating to alternative working arrangements.
- Participate in remote working arrangements where appropriate.

### **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Monitor school communications.
  - Ensure emergency contact details remain current.
  - Make appropriate arrangements for pupil collection in severe weather situations.
  - Follow school instructions during emergency closures.
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## 5. Decision-Making Process

The Headteacher will consider:

- Current and forecast weather conditions.
- Advice from emergency services and local authorities.
- Site safety, including access routes, playgrounds and car parks.
- Availability of sufficient trained staff.
- Availability of utilities, heating, water and catering.
- Ability to safeguard pupils effectively.
- Transport availability.

The school will make every reasonable effort to remain open where safe to do so. However, closure may be necessary if:

- Site conditions are unsafe.
- Staffing levels are insufficient to operate safely.
- Utilities fail.
- Transport arrangements become unsafe.
- Safeguarding cannot be maintained.

The decision may include:

- Full closure.
- Partial closure.
- Delayed opening.
- Early closure.
- Restriction of use to certain areas of the building.

The Headteacher and staff should, wherever possible, plan ahead when severe weather warnings are issued and agree potential alternative working arrangements to ensure continuity of school operations and educational provision.

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## 6. Staff Attendance Expectations

In all circumstances, employees are expected to make a genuine and reasonable effort to attend work and ensure that school business and educational provision can continue during periods of adverse weather. Where police, weather agencies or emergency services advise against unnecessary travel, employees should discuss alternative arrangements with the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Employees experiencing travel difficulties must:

- Contact the Headteacher as soon as practicable and normally no later than one hour before their start time.
- Explain the circumstances affecting travel.
- Keep the school informed throughout the day where appropriate.

Alternative arrangements may include:

- Working remotely where operationally appropriate.
- Undertaking planning, assessment, administration or training activities from home.
- Attendance at a nearer Durham County Council workplace where agreed.
- Temporary amendments to working arrangements.

The school recognises its duty of care and will not expect employees to take unreasonable risks.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- Pregnant employees.
- Disabled employees.
- Employees with health conditions.
- Staff with caring responsibilities.

Where employees are unable to attend work due to travel difficulties, childcare responsibilities or other caring responsibilities arising from adverse weather and are unable to undertake meaningful work remotely, arrangements may include:

- Making up the time at a later date.
- Annual leave.
- Time off in lieu.
- Unpaid leave or
- Another arrangement agreed by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis.

Employees arriving late or leaving early due to adverse weather will discuss arrangements with the Headteacher. Consideration may be given to making up hours at a later date, authorised leave arrangements or other agreed solutions according to individual circumstances and employment terms.

## **Training Courses and Off-Site Meetings**

Employees scheduled to attend training courses, conferences or off-site meetings during periods of adverse weather should assess whether travel is safe and avoid unnecessary risk.

Alternative arrangements, including virtual attendance or postponement, should be considered wherever possible.

Where a training provider or organiser ends an event early due to adverse weather, the employee will be credited with their normal working hours for that period.

# **7. School Closure Procedures**

The Headteacher will determine whether closure is necessary following a risk assessment.

Where closure occurs:

1. Durham County Council's school closure reporting procedures will be completed.
2. Closure information will be published through agreed communication channels.
3. Staff will be informed directly whenever possible.
4. Governors will be notified.
5. Transport providers will be informed where required.

6. Catering and contracted services will be notified.

The school will maintain records of:

- Reasons for closure.
- Risk assessments completed.
- Communications issued.
- Duration of closure.

Where conditions improve, reopening decisions will follow further assessment of risks.

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## 8. Communication Arrangements

The school will use one or more of the following communication methods:

- Arbor communications.
- Class Dojo.
- School website.
- Durham County Council school closure systems.
- Telephone communication.
- Email.

Communications will, where possible, include:

- Reasons for closure or disruption.
- Expected duration.
- Arrangements for remote learning.
- Collection arrangements where applicable.
- Updates regarding reopening.

The school will endeavour to communicate decisions as early as possible.

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## 9. Remote Education Arrangements

Where adverse weather results in closure or partial closure, the school will seek to provide continuity of learning through proportionate remote education arrangements.

Remote learning may include:

- Learning assignments through established digital platforms.
- Online resources.
- Pre-prepared learning packs where required.
- Directed independent activities.

The school recognises that adverse weather can affect access to technology and therefore expectations will be reasonable and proportionate.

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## 10. Health and Safety Considerations

The Headteacher or designated staff member will undertake site safety checks which may include:

- Condition of entrances and exits.
- Paths, playgrounds and car parks.
- Accessibility routes.
- Heating, lighting and utilities.
- Roofs and structures following storms.
- Flood risks.
- Ice and snow clearance arrangements.

Control measures may include:

- Gritting and snow clearance.
- Restricting access to hazardous areas.
- Alternative entrance arrangements.
- Increased supervision.
- Temporary timetable adjustments.

Risk assessments will be reviewed as conditions change.

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## 11. Safeguarding Considerations

The safety and welfare of pupils remains paramount during adverse weather events.

The school will consider:

- Safe arrival and collection arrangements.
- Availability of safeguarding personnel.
- Communication with vulnerable families.
- Risks associated with early closure.
- Support for pupils with SEND.
- Accessibility for pupils with medical needs.
- Any child protection concerns arising from disrupted attendance.

Where the school is aware of vulnerable pupils who may be affected disproportionately by closure or severe weather, reasonable attempts will be made to maintain contact and provide support.

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## 12. Business Continuity

The school will maintain arrangements to support continuity of critical functions, including:

- Safeguarding.
- Payroll and finance.
- Site security.
- Statutory recording requirements.
- Communication systems.
- Educational provision where practicable.

The Adverse Weather Policy should be read alongside the school's Business Continuity Plan.

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## **13. Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following significant adverse weather incidents.
- Following changes to legislation, DfE guidance or Durham County Council procedures.

Any lessons learned from weather-related incidents will inform future revisions.

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