



Human Resources

# ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The University's normal practice is to remain open during adverse weather and to ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal.
- 1.2 The University recognises that, during periods of extreme adverse weather, or when there are significant disruptions to public transport, employees may face difficulties in attending University premises and/or returning home.
- 1.3 The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of its employees and therefore expects that all employees have due regard for their own safety and the safety of others in the event of adverse weather conditions.
- 1.4 The aim of this Policy is to outline the responsibilities of employees for attendance on University premises during extreme adverse weather conditions or when there are significant disruptions to public transport and to confirm appropriate procedures.
- 1.5 The policy outlines procedures for employees and line managers to follow to ensure that a fair and transparent process is in place when making decisions regarding absence relating to adverse weather conditions.
- 1.6 Where contacting the University under this policy an employee should make contact by telephone or by calling their line manager via Microsoft Teams. Other methods of contact, such as text message or email, should only be used if a direct conversation with their line manager is not practicable and should always be followed up with a direct conversation as soon as possible.
- 1.7 In a situation where an employee's line manager is unavailable, the employee should contact an appropriate manager in the department. The manager may make decisions as outlined in this policy, as if they were the line manager.
- 1.8 This Policy applies to all employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.
- 1.9 This Policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time to time.

## **2 REASONABLE EFFORTS TO ATTEND UNIVERSITY PREMISES**

- 2.1 Employees who are due to attend University premises should use their best endeavours to do so at their normal or scheduled time of work in all circumstances. This may include leaving extra time for the journey, taking an alternative route or using an alternative means of transport. However, it is not the University's intention that employees put themselves at unnecessary risk when trying to attend work. Employees should use their own judgment and, if unable to attend University premises, contact their line manager as soon as possible.

## **3 WHEN THIS POLICY WILL APPLY**

- 3.1 This Policy shall apply when an employee believes they will be unable to safely travel to and from University premises due to either extreme adverse weather conditions or when there are significant disruptions to public transport.

## **4 ADVERSE CONDITIONS OR SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT OCCURING AT THE START OF A WORKING DAY**

- 4.1 Employees unable to attend University premises or delayed by extreme adverse weather conditions or significant disruptions to public transport should contact their line manager as soon as possible and before the employee's normal start time. Working from home may be an alternative in some situations, but individuals should not assume that this is appropriate without first having a discussion with their line manager.
- 4.2 Employees who are unable to attend University premises should check the situation throughout the day in case it improves. Employees must keep their line manager regularly updated on their likelihood of being able to attend University premises later that day. If conditions improve sufficiently and working from home has not already been agreed with their line manager beforehand, employees should report this to their line manager and then attend University premises as soon as possible unless told otherwise.
- 4.3 Employees who do not make reasonable efforts to attend University premises for work on time, or who fail to contact and/or regularly update their line manager and without good reason, may be subject to disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The University will consider all the circumstances including; the distance the employee has to travel, weather conditions in the employee's location, the status of roads and/or public transport, and the efforts made by other employees in similar circumstances.

## **5 LATENESS**

- 5.1 Employees who are delayed will have the opportunity to make up this time on the day in question or within a reasonable time. However, if the lateness is negligible, having regards to the severity of the weather conditions or disruptions to public transport and the employee's personal circumstances, and the manager is satisfied that the employee made a genuine attempt to arrive on time, the line manager may agree to waive this requirement.
- 5.2 If lateness amounts to half the time of the employee's normal working day or more, the provisions in relation to absence below will apply.

## **6 ABSENCE**

- 6.1 Where an employee is unable to attend University premises because of extreme adverse weather conditions or significant disruptions to public transport, it is the responsibility of the employee's line manager to make a decision as to whether or not the employee should:
  - 6.1.1 be required to work from home;
  - 6.1.2 take the time as annual leave;
  - 6.1.3 take time accrued through any additional hours already worked (i.e. take time off in lieu); or
  - 6.1.4 make up for the time at a later date.
- 6.2 When making this decision the line manager should take into account the employee's circumstances (i.e. distance to travel and the mode of transport), the needs of the University and the employee's views.
- 6.3 When these options are not available or where the line manager sees fit, the employee may, with the consent of their line manager:

6.3.1 be paid as if they had attended work on University premises; or

6.3.2 take unpaid leave and a deduction will be made from the employee's wages.

## **7 SCHOOL CLOSURES AND OTHER UNEXPECTED ISSUES**

7.1 In an emergency situation involving a dependent, an employee has the right to take unpaid time off should it not have been agreed with their line manager that it would be possible for them to work effectively from home instead.

7.2 In the context of extreme adverse weather conditions and significant transport disruption, situations could include:

- school is closed and an employee cannot leave their child
- caring arrangements for a disabled relative are cancelled

7.3 The employee should talk to their line manager as soon as they know that they may need to either work from home or take time off, explaining:

- exactly what the issue is (e.g. school closure)
- whether they feel that they will be able to work effectively from home or not
- the likely length of the absence and/or need to work from home.

7.4 Where it is operationally feasible for the employee to work from home, and if it is agreed that they will be able to effectively do so whilst caring for their dependants, the line manager is encouraged to allow some flexibility to the employee in terms of their working times/hours (e.g. allowing the employee to temporarily adapt their working hours around any home-schooling requirements they may also need to accommodate).

7.5 In situations where it is not agreed as appropriate for the individual to work from home, the line manager and employee may agree that this time can be taken as annual leave, taken as time accrued through any additional hours already worked (i.e. taken as time off in lieu) or for the individual to make the time up at a later date if it is practicable for them to do so, to avoid any deduction in pay.

## **8 ADVERSE CONDITIONS OR SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING THE COURSE OF A WORKING DAY**

8.1 It is the University's opinion that an employee is best placed to identify whether there is a need to leave University premises early in the event of adverse weather conditions, taking into account their individual circumstances (i.e. distance from home to University premises and mode of transport) and local weather reports.

8.2 In such cases, it is the responsibility of the employee's line manager, taking into account the amount of working hours left in the day, the employee's circumstances and the needs of the University, to make a decision, in consultation with the employee, as to whether or not the employee should:

8.2.1 be required to work from home for the remainder of the day;

8.2.2 take the time as annual leave;

8.2.3 take time accrued through any additional hours already worked (i.e. take time off in lieu);

8.2.4 make up for the time at a later date

8.2.5 be paid as if she/he attended work for the full day; or

8.2.6 take unpaid leave and a deduction will be made from the employee's wages.

## **9 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

9.1 Whilst the University will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees, employees are reminded of their duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This includes taking extra care when travelling to and from University premises in adverse weather conditions.

9.2 Individuals who have a physical disability or long-standing medical condition which effects their mobility, and individuals who are pregnant, may wish to take extra caution. Such individuals are therefore encouraged to speak to their line manager as soon as possible if they have any concerns about their safety when travelling to and from University premises in adverse weather conditions.

## **10 TEACHING COMMITMENTS**

10.1 The cancellation of classes should always be a last resort, and where this happens, they should be rescheduled. In the event that a member of teaching staff is unable to get to campus due to adverse weather, they should consider the alternative arrangements that can be put in place – for example, whether the class can be delivered online, covered by a colleague (if possible), learning activities set for students, sessions swapped around, or similar. If no alternative arrangement is possible and the session needs to be rescheduled, this should be discussed with the designated line manager. If a class has to be postponed and rescheduled, teaching staff should follow the arrangements detailed in the Class Cancellation Policy:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/classcancellationpolicy.pdf>

## **11 CLOSURE OF A UNIVERSITY SITE**

11.1 In the rare event of closure of one of the University sites due to adverse weather, and if it is not possible to work from an alternative site, consideration will be given to the options outlined in Section 6 of the policy. If the University takes the decision to close all sites, employees who cannot work from home will receive normal pay for the period of closure.

11.2 Some staff engaged in what are deemed to be essential services (e.g. Security) may still be asked or required to attend University premises during the closure.

## **12 STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

12.1 In the event of adverse weather conditions, the University will endeavour to provide employees with regular updates regarding the University sites and share links to useful resources regarding local weather conditions and travel information, to help inform employees of the current situation.

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Responsible Officer	Director of Human Resources