



Policy Directive, Procedures and Guidelines

SEVERE WEATHER

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Summary of Changes¹ from Previous Versions

Version no/Date	Change	Comment	Section/ Page
V2.0 (12 Dec 2019)	Annual update	<p>Clarification that there may be instances where a decision to close all schools is taken centrally</p> <p>Statement that schools must not communicate open/closed status to parents/carers until the central communication has been issued.</p> <p>[Update to titles and minor changes to numbering etc throughout]</p>	<p>P4</p> <p>P8</p>
V3.0 (Nov 2020)	Annual update	<p>Branding and template updated.</p> <p>Noted the potential of adopting a “one out, all out approach” when taking into account staffing inter-dependencies between schools during severe weather.</p> <p>Clarity added over terminology, around the use of The Education Office and Education Resources and Estates Management.</p> <p>Additional sentence added to ensure that if the decision is taken to close all schools that clear information is provided to the public to demonstrate why this decision is necessary.</p> <p>Wording added to note schools should ensure that learners have the opportunity to access learning resources during any school closure. This will be appropriate to the stage and age of learners and is subject to the length of closure and how far it has been expected.</p>	<p>1.1</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>4.0</p> <p>5.0</p>
V4.0 (Dec 2021)	Annual update	Reviewed no significant changes required	
	<i>Table started Dec 2019</i>		

¹ Material changes only. Minor changes (such as to punctuation, grammar, etc.) will not be listed

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement

This policy directive explains how The Education Office will work with schools and other agencies to plan, manage and communicate the operation of schools when adversely affected by snow and/or ice. The policy will also be used as a generic framework for other conditions which might affect the safe access to, or operation of, schools.

Schools should remain open unless:

1. The forecast (e.g. a red-level snow or ice warning) or prevalent weather conditions are such that Education Resources and Estates Management is concerned for the health, safety or wellbeing of those using its sites; or
2. Education Resources and Estates Management has been requested by a multi-agency co-ordination group to close one or more schools in the interests of protecting the Island's infrastructure, or other significant reason; or
3. Travel to and from the site is impracticable and/or too hazardous and advised as such by the Police; or
4. School buildings are unusable through damage to, or failure of, core building components, essential on-site heating or sanitation services; or
5. The number of staff able to reach a particular school is inadequate to run it, even on an emergency basis with severely restricted curriculum delivery.

Education Resources and Estates Management will adopt an active monitoring status upon receipt of a Snow or Ice Warning (minimum level Yellow) from the Jersey Meteorological Department. It will also review all wind and storm warnings issued at red level and decide what, if any, action might be appropriate.

The process for implementing the procedures to manage the Severe Weather Policy will be triggered by receipt of an Orange or Red Snow or Ice Warning from the Jersey Meteorological Department, at which point the Education Resources and Estates Management Severe Weather Co-ordinator will inform the teams responsible for each site that they need to implement their relevant site planning and inspection processes.

The decision to open or close any school or site will usually be based on information received from site-specific risk assessments (see Appendix 1), but may also be based on consideration of criteria 1-5 above. There may, therefore, be instances where a decision to close all schools is taken centrally even where it might be possible for a number of sites to open. In view of the staffing inter-dependencies between schools, it may also be appropriate to adopt a "one out, all out" approach.

The closure of any site has to be sanctioned by the Director of Operations (Social Security, Education & Inclusion) or his nominated Deputy.

1.2 Policy Objectives

The policy is intended to inform the planning and management processes to be used before and during severe weather and to set out the criteria schools should use when making decisions in respect of the management and operation of their respective sites.

1.3 Policy Application

This policy applies to all States-maintained schools (including voluntary schools) in Guernsey and Alderney. Throughout this policy directive, 'Headteacher' also refers to Heads of Service, Secondary School Principals and the College of Further Education (CFE) Principal, and 'school' refers to any education establishment.

1.4 Accountabilities

Headteachers are accountable for:

- Ensuring that staff are aware of the procedures for their site(s) and their respective responsibilities
- Ensuring that this policy is observed in their establishment

The terminology describing responsibility for some of the services delivered centrally has changed. For clarity the Education Resources and Estates Management is responsible for functions relating to the Education estate, Health and Safety, Risk Management etc. The Education Office is responsible for providing governance, support and challenge to settings.

1.5 Associated Documents

The States' Trading Supervisory Board has, through States Works, a defined plan for the clearance of snow and ice from a number of main and arterial roads across the Island. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the States Works Procedures will not be activated at weekends.

Further information, including a map of which roads will be targeted for clearance, can be found at www.gov.gg/snow.

2.0 Procedures

2.1 Preparation and Planning

The Health and Safety Team will:

- Provide general guidance in respect of risk management, risk assessment and fire evacuation procedures to support the planning and preparation processes

The Estates Team will:

- Provide support to staff responsible for each site in order to identify Severe Weather hazards, define and implement control measures and review the site evacuation procedures
- Ensure that sufficient CMA40 (de-icer) is available for all sites to enable clearance of the areas identified within the Site-Specific Risk Assessment
- Ensure that caretaking and other staff as necessary are properly equipped to manage the distribution and application of CMA40 safely and effectively

The Administration & Procurement Manager will:

- Ordinarily fulfil the role of Severe Weather Co-ordinator
- Confirm and maintain details of information providers and test communication methods with representatives of each site's "Snow Response Team", as appropriate
- Confirm with the Guernsey/Jersey Meteorological Office the appropriate contact details for receipt of Snow or Ice Warnings
- Liaise with other relevant parties, including transport providers and States Works

The Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site will:

- Identify a "Snow Response Team" for each site, inform the Administration & Procurement Manager of the names and ensure the contact details listed within the ConnectEd Critical Incidents [folder](#) are up to date. The "Snow Response Team" should include at least one member of the site's Senior Leadership Team
- Review the evacuation procedures for their site(s). Identify, plan, communicate and manage any variances for their implementation in severe weather
- Prepare and maintain the Site-Specific Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1/1A) for their site(s) and ensure the Administration & Procurement Manager is sent a copy of the latest version
- Identify sufficient, secure and appropriate storage locations for the CMA40, personal protective equipment and application tools
- Check the quantity and condition of any CMA40 on the site

2.2 Activation

2.2.1 Active Monitoring Status

- Education Resources and Estates Management will adopt an active monitoring status upon receipt of a Snow or Ice Warning (minimum level Yellow) from the Jersey Meteorological Department
- The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will communicate the received information and status to the heads of all schools and services. Individual Snow Response Teams are not expected to attend their respective sites at this status level. It is not always possible for Education Resources and Estates Management to contact the Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site individually. If local and/or national media are broadcasting information about the potential for severe weather the Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site should check their work e-mail accounts to see if Education Resources and Estates Management has issued any relevant information or guidance
- The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will advise of any changes to contact details for the reporting of individual sites' operability status

2.2.2 Activated Status

- The Severe Weather process will be activated upon receipt of an Orange or Red Snow or Ice Warning from the Jersey Meteorological Department
- The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will communicate the received information and status to the heads of all schools and services. Individual Snow Response Teams will be expected to attend their respective sites at this status level

2.3 Invocation

1. Once Activated Status has been confirmed, the members of each site's Snow Response Team should plan to arrive on their site around 6am on the specified day if it is safe for them to do so
2. The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will make contact with the various agencies to establish road and weather conditions, the progress of road clearance activities and the likely availability of public transport
3. The Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site will undertake a dynamic risk assessment for their site and check that appropriate control/mitigation measures are in place
4. The Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site will determine whether, in their view, it is safe and practicable for their site to "open for business" and will inform the Severe Weather Co-ordinator as soon as possible and by 7am at the latest. This communication should be effected either:

- By e-mail to severeweathereducation@gov.gg (preferred)
- By telephone or SMS text to the main or backup contact telephone numbers (these will be confirmed upon Education Resources and Estates Management adopting active monitoring status)

Where e-mail communication is used, if possible the subject line should include the name of the site and whether it is safe to open or not (e.g. “Forest – Open” or “Amherst – Closed”)

5. If, for whatever reason, it is not possible for a member of a site’s Snow Response Team to attend the site and relevant condition information cannot be determined by other means, the site will be assumed to be unsafe and/or unviable and will remain closed
6. The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will collate the information gathered and liaise with the Director of Operations (Social Security, Education & Inclusion), who will decide which, if any, sites should be closed
7. The Severe Weather Co-ordinator will inform the designated member of the Corporate Communications team of the decision. Corporate Communications will advise the media as appropriate, by 7:15am at the latest
8. The Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site will ensure that the various measures defined within the Site Specific Risk Assessment are implemented and will advise the Severe Weather Co-ordinator immediately of any adverse change in site conditions or operational circumstances
9. The Headteacher or other member of staff responsible for each site will ensure that the Estates Team is informed of the quantity of CMA40 used in order that supplies may be replenished in time for subsequent instances

3.0 Site-specific Inspections and Risk Assessments

The Headteacher or nominated member of staff responsible for each site will establish a site-specific Risk Assessment procedure. This will identify key hazards and control measures and will also provide a framework for dynamic risk assessment which will be undertaken for each site in order to determine whether it is safe to open.

4.0 Announcements

Specific announcements will be made by BBC Guernsey and Island FM on behalf of The Education Office, detailing which schools are open, closed, or whose status has not yet been confirmed. The Education Office will also inform Channel TV as appropriate. Where possible, information will also be given concerning school transport, although as the viability of bus services can change rapidly depending on road conditions transport providers are expected to provide direct updates via the same channels of communication.

When severe weather occurs overnight, these announcements will be made from 6:30am, or as soon as possible thereafter. A final decision will be taken no later than 7:15am.

The decision to open or close any site(s) will be taken by The Education Office, taking into consideration all information known to it at the time. **Schools must not communicate their open/closed status to parents/carers until the central communication has been issued.**

When severe weather conditions arise during the school day, announcements will be made by Corporate Communications as soon as decisions are taken and regularly thereafter. The sequence for communication of such announcements will be:

- a. Schools will make arrangements to contact parents/carers
- b. Contact will be made with transport providers
- c. The media will be alerted

Contact with the media will be managed by Corporate Communications, with the exception of St. Anne's School in Alderney, the Headteacher of which may need to make individual announcements.

It is essential that if the decision is taken to close all schools that clear information is provided to the public to demonstrate why this decision is necessary.

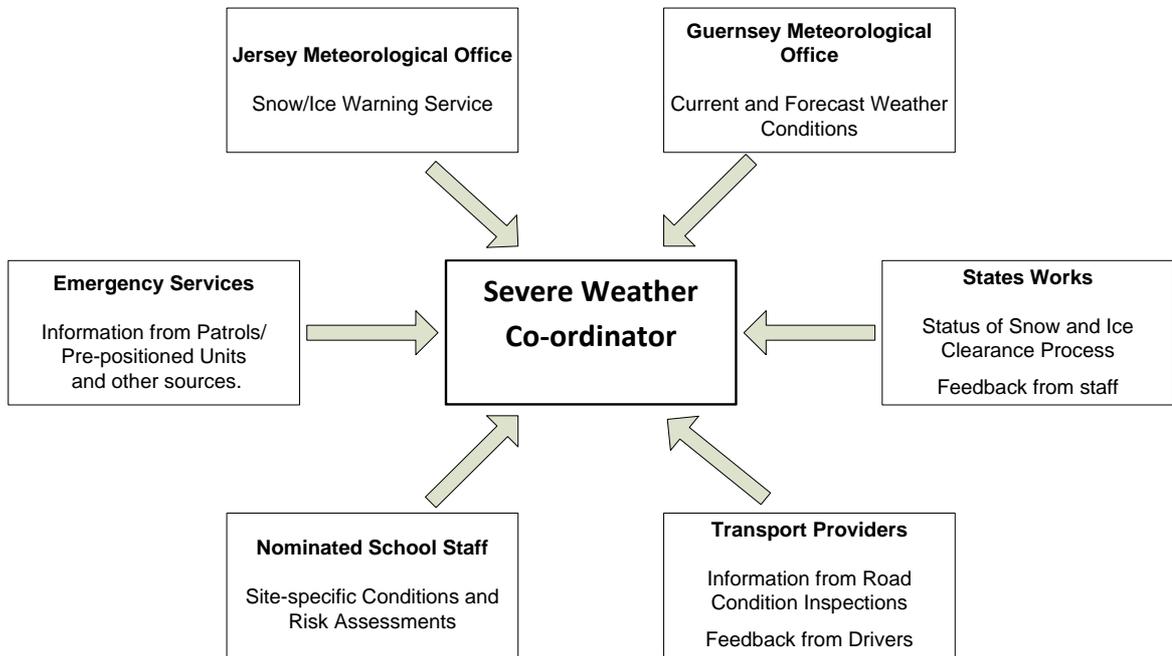
5.0 Additional Notes

- It is expected that parents/carers use their discretion to keep a child at home if they believe that conditions are such as to make it unreasonable or unsafe for the child to attempt to reach school
- The minimum temperature for classrooms and offices is 16°C, although a temperature of at least 18°C is preferable. Staff responsible for assessing the operability of their site(s) should base their decision on the likelihood of the heating system(s) being able to achieve and maintain at least 16°C for these areas
- Should any school(s) be closed, wherever possible staff are expected to utilise their time to undertake appropriate work-related tasks.
- Schools should ensure that learners have the opportunity to access learning resources during any school closure. This will be appropriate to the stage and age of learners and is subject to the length of closure and how far it has been expected. Lessons learned from the [Distance Learning offer](#) provided during Covid can be applied appropriately to each setting.

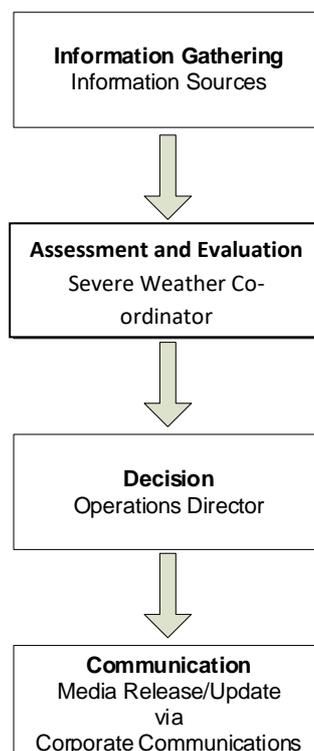
- Unless instructed otherwise, and safe to do so, staff should attend their usual place of work. School staff may be requested to attend an alternative school to the one they usually work at in order to ensure that schools can operate. In cases where school staff are likely to need to walk to their place of work, absence exceptions will be made for those who are unable to do so for medical or other good reasons
- Specific arrangements will be made for the Music Centre, which operates from the Grammar School and Sixth Form Centre and Les Ozouets Campus sites on Saturdays, where severe weather is forecast and there is a likelihood of disruption to its operation
- If schools are closed due to severe weather no community use bookings will be able to be facilitated. Hirers will be offered a refund or sessions on alternative dates
- Irrespective of whether schools are open or closed to learners, site management and caretaking staff should endeavour to attend their respective sites if possible and safe. They should:
 - Check the site to ensure that there are no leaks or other issues that would affect its ongoing operation
 - Ensure that all relevant building systems are operational, such that normal operation is not compromised
 - Seek to keep access/egress to the site clear and safe.

6.0 Responsibility for Action

The sources of information on which decisions will be based in severe weather and adverse road conditions are shown below:



The decision on which plan of action to follow will be taken by the Director of Operations (Social Security, Education & Inclusion), who will then advise the President of the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture. The decision/communication process is shown below:



The decision will be based not only on information received from the Severe Weather Co-ordinator, but also on reports from the Headteachers and/or caretakers of each school. Consideration will also be given to transport information and weather forecasts in respect of whether staff and learners are likely to be able to make their way safely from school sites at the end of the day's session.

While these guidelines apply principally to action required when severe weather conditions occur overnight, the same procedures will be followed with regard to sources of information, decision chains and announcements of plans of action when severe weather conditions occur during the day. If severe weather disruption is highly likely during the day, consideration should still be given to closing the school before the normal start time, even if early conditions are manageable, as late decisions may have an impact on road usage as well as childcare implications.

Where it is safe to do so and relevant schools are planned to open, The Education Office will endeavour to operate its Special Educational Needs transport fleet. However, it may be necessary to cancel or modify certain routes due to unsafe driving conditions or insufficient staffing levels. In such instances parents/carers will be made aware of this in order that they may make alternative arrangements.

7.0 Information to Staff, Learners and Parents/Carers

It is the responsibility of each school or unit to ensure that its staff, learners and parents/carers know and understand this procedure and the likely implications of its invocation for the relevant site. Wherever possible, information will be provided to staff and parents/carers in advance of the possibility of school closures due to severe weather.

Education Resources and Estates Management will inform the heads of all schools and services upon receipt of information which indicates the likelihood of severe weather, including details of any warning(s) received and what action is required.

Appendix 1: Severe Weather Risk Assessment - Guidance for Preparation and Use

Notes

The term “Head” refers to the Headteacher, Head of Service, Secondary School Principal, College of Further Education Principal or other nominated individual for each establishment/site.

The Estates team should be contacted if any assistance is required with the control and/or management of site-related hazards.

Preparation

Each element of the Risk Assessment matrix should be carefully considered by the person completing the form. Site-specific elements should be identified and included within the matrix and any generic items tailored as appropriate. Hazards not already included within the template should be inserted under the relevant section (Environment, People, Equipment and Materials). Assistance will be provided to identify the required volume and location of CMA40 storage on each site and the application rate.

Hazards prefixed OFB (open for business) should determine whether the site is considered to be safe to use (at or after the time of assessment) following the completion of a dynamic risk assessment. Hazards not marked OFB may be given lower priority during such checks but the relevant control/management measures should nevertheless be confirmed to be in place. If one or more OFB hazard/s cannot be satisfactorily managed the site will be deemed unsafe to open.

Use

The Site Specific Risk Assessment should be used following notification by the Severe Weather Co-ordinator on receipt of an Orange or Red Snow/Ice Warning from the Jersey Meteorological Office and instigation of The Education Office’s Severe Weather Procedure.

Review

The generic form will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of The Education Office’s planning processes. Feedback and comments will be welcomed and should be directed to the Administration & Procurement Manager.

The Site Specific Risk Assessment should be reviewed after every use and on an annual basis.

Appendix 1A: Severe Weather - Site-Specific Risk Assessment (Snow/Ice)

Establishment: _____

Assessment date: _____

Site: _____

Completed by: _____

Objective: Determine whether the premises can safely be opened for use

Date reviewed: _____

1. Hazard	2. Who might be harmed?	3. Control Measures in Place	4. Dynamic Assessment
ENVIRONMENT			
OFB²: Access and egress from and onto highway is closed or not possible for emergency vehicles.	All site users	Ensure that sufficient and appropriate access can be established and maintained throughout the period of site operation. Regular checks during severe weather conditions.	*
OFB: Vehicle risk on ice and snow – damage/ collision/ site blockage/ pedestrian risk.	All site users	CMA40 spread in advance informed by weather forecast. Ensure minimum acceptable width of road cleared; consider proximity to/ separation from pedestrian walkways. Consider signage, restriction of access other than employees.	*

² Hazards prefixed OFB (open for business) should determine whether the site is considered to be safe to use (at or after the time of assessment) following the completion of a dynamic risk assessment. Hazards not marked OFB may be given lower priority during such checks but the relevant control/management measures should nevertheless be confirmed to be in place. If one or more OFB hazard/s cannot be satisfactorily managed the site will be deemed unsafe to open.

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<p>OFB: Slip, trip and fall on ice and/or snow.</p>	<p>All site users</p>	<p>Eliminate ice caused by standing water, outflows etc.</p> <p>CMA40 spread in advance informed by weather forecast.</p> <p>Ensure walkways clear of slime, leaves etc.</p> <p>Restrict use of walkways not cleared/ open – use signage and hazard tape. Information to all users re: safe use i.e. footwear, no running etc.</p> <p>Ensure minimum requirement of walkways is assessed as suitable and sufficient.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>1. Hazard</p>	<p>2. Who might be harmed?</p>	<p>3. Control Measures in Place</p>	<p>4. Dynamic Assessment</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p>			
<p>OFB. Premises not sufficiently heated.</p>	<p>All site users</p>	<p>Ensure that a minimum temperature of 16°C can be achieved and maintained in teaching areas.</p> <p>Ensure that heating fuel supplies are sufficiently in excess of likely needs.</p> <p>Regular maintenance and monitoring. Minimise draughts and the length of time that doors are open.</p> <p>Advise site users to wear additional layers of clothing.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>OFB: Emergency exits blocked – users at risk because they cannot evacuate.</p> <p>OFB: Walkways to assembly areas not usable.</p>	<p>All site users</p>	<p>Good housekeeping ensures that exits are clear and accessible from inside premises. Fire doors to be checked and confirmed operable (not obstructed by snow/ice).</p> <p>Refer to site-specific Fire and Emergency Procedures.</p> <p>Snow/ice clearance activities scheduled in priority order.</p>	<p>*</p>

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<p>OFB: Communication failure – telephones/broadband/ mobiles.</p> <p>Communication systems to users/ parents/carers not known.</p>	<p>All site users</p>	<p>Essential communications checked to be working before opening the site.</p> <p>Key staff to ensure that their mobiles are charged/ working/on and numbers exchanged.</p> <p>Staff should communicate the likelihood of attendance to a single point of contact – should be planned in advance.</p> <p>Education Office communication systems agreed and known.</p> <p>Information to users/ parents/carers in place and known.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>OFB: Lack of hot and cold running water leads to heating, hygiene, hydration & safety risk.</p>	<p>All site users</p>	<p>Ensure that all essential water supplies are working e.g. toilets, washing hands, catering etc.</p>	<p>*</p>

1. Hazard	2. Who might be harmed?	3. Control Measures in Place	4. Dynamic Assessment
PEOPLE			
<p>OFB: Insufficient staff for establishment to function safely.</p>	<p>Employees/ Learners</p>	<p>Minimum staffing needs are identified/recorded and checked as appropriate before OFB agreed.</p> <p>Staff names/addresses to be checked in advance to identify likely staffing levels.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>Employees cold and wet on arrival.</p>	<p>Employees</p>	<p>All instructed to wear appropriate warm, waterproof clothing and suitable footwear (grip sole and no/low heel)</p>	

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Learners cold and wet on arrival.	Learners	Request learners to wear outdoor coats and appropriate footwear. Consider permitting the wearing of trainers or other footwear? Ensure that there is no delay in permitting entry to the premises on arrival.	
Employees working alone in severe weather conditions.	Employees	Head to ensure that communication systems are in place.	
Staff with specific duties / tasks not trained and informed sufficiently.	Employees / Learners	Head to ensure that staff are aware of the expectations of them and that they have received sufficient guidance and training to be able to undertake any such tasks safely and effectively.	

1. Hazard	2. Who might be harmed?	3. Control Measures in Place	4. Dynamic Assessment
EQUIPMENT			
Insufficient, inappropriate or unsuitable equipment for caretakers and others.	Caretakers and others	Ensure that sufficient and appropriate equipment is provided. Ensure that users have received appropriate instruction in their use.	
Danger of fire/accident from use of additional heating appliances.	Premises users	Establishment policy for management to be in place. Ensure that appliances are safe and kept away from flammable materials.	

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MATERIALS			
CMA40 misuse risk.	Caretakers, Learners, other site users	Ensure that it is used in compliance with procedures and Safety Data Sheet. Access to CMA40 and dispersal tools should be restricted. CMA40 should be securely stored and checked for availability.	