

## 1. Introduction

This guidance is intended to be read in conjunction with the Estates Department *Snow, Ice and Associated Low Temperatures Policy and Procedure* and summarises:

- general guidance for managers in relation to principles and tips to be applied in advance of, at the time of, and following, adverse weather
- University communications details and timescales
- useful weather and transportation websites.

## 2. Principles

Thorough advance planning will allow managers to deal with adverse weather decisions in the most informed way possible.

A degree of flexibility is required by all staff and their managers during adverse weather conditions. The University will stay open where possible to ensure a normal level of service is maintained unless specifically broadcast by the Press Office. The safety of both staff and students will be a key consideration in deciding whether to reduce the level of service. With regard to support for staff and students, the Director of Estates and the Director of Commercial Services will ensure that volunteer staff are available to maintain essential engineering and residential services.

Updates will be made available to all staff via the University website, all-staff emails and Twitter. Staff should also keep themselves informed about both travel and weather conditions and consult with their line manager over the most appropriate course of action. Staff who do not have access to the web should make alternative arrangements with colleagues so that they are aware of any updates.

If a member of staff is unable to attend their normal place of work, or is likely to be significantly delayed, they should speak directly with their line manager, or in his/her absence another member of senior staff, ideally within one hour of their normal commencement time, to advise their personal circumstances and to discuss any issues relevant to that day's work.

Where the line manager and member of staff agree that it is not possible, or not safe, to come to work, the following options may be considered:

- a day's paid annual leave
- a paid day with the agreement to make up lost hours on a later date(s)
- for the member of staff to work from home (subject to agreement with their line manager)
- a day's unpaid leave.

In the event that a member of staff is unable to attend work the line manager should confirm agreement with the individual following the event on how to treat the absence for payment purposes.

In the event that a member of staff needs to take time off to care for dependants for reasons related to adverse weather (eg school/nursery closure) one of the above options will be considered. It should be noted that the statutory right to take time off to deal with unforeseen events regarding dependants does not provide the right to take extended leave, but only the right to take off what time is reasonable to allow the member of staff to deal with the unforeseen event.

### **3. Management Responsibilities**

When it comes to the treatment of staff in responding to adverse weather conditions, all managers are expected to:

- treat staff fairly and consistently
- ensure that adequate communication takes place with their staff
- have regard for the health and safety of staff and students, particularly where special conditions apply such as pregnancy or disability
- support staff who work long hours to maintain services.

If an employee fails to attend work, or is significantly late, due to adverse weather conditions without any notification, the University reserves the right to treat the absence in the same way as any other unauthorised absence. In such a circumstance the University will investigate the employee's reasons for non-attendance before withholding pay.

Managers who hold responsibility for student activities (eg Heads of Academic Schools) are expected to develop plans for dealing with students. This may include assigning a designated individual within the School to set up web messages and/or emails informing students of cancellation of classes and other activities.

### **4. Management Tips: Prior to Adverse Weather**

- Ensure all staff are aware of the names/contact details (eg email address and/or mobile phone number) of their line manager.
- Direct staff to the University's IT facilities that provide useful resources to enable remote working (see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/itservices/staff/>).
- Where possible, communicate with staff when adverse weather is imminently forecast to confirm plans for undertaking remote work as well as specific steps to be taken should cancellation of classes, events or meetings be required.

- Have a delegation plan in place for who will take your place in the event you are not personally available to be in touch with staff at the time of adverse weather.

## **5. Management Tips: At the Time of Adverse Weather**

- Check the website early (see Timescales below) and monitor Campus online announcements throughout the day.
- Make yourself available and be proactive. E-mail staff early in the day to remind them to get in touch with you about their ability to attend work.
- Stay in touch with staff throughout the day as conditions change.
- If weather conditions worsen throughout the day, liaise directly with staff to discuss their circumstances and determine the most appropriate course of action in considering safety issues in relation to early departure.

## **6. Management Tips: Following Adverse Weather**

- Demonstrate appreciation and thanks to staff who made it in to work and confirm how individual situations will be dealt with where staff were unable to attend work.
- Answer questions, share lessons learned and make adjustments as needed for the next round of adverse weather.

## **7. Communications**

The University Press Office will endeavour to communicate access problems at the earliest opportunity. Updates will be posted on Campus online on a regular basis and will be sent out via all-staff emails. Both staff and students are actively encouraged to sign up to the University's Twitter feed (Unikent) as regular updates will be issued on Twitter.

All staff should keep a note of the email address and/or telephone number for their line manager in their School/Department to be able to get in touch in the event of adverse weather.

Information for students will be posted on the Student Portal and also sent out via all-student emails. However, it is the responsibility of Heads of School and Sections to have plans in place to facilitate local communications with both staff and students as appropriate.

## **8. Adverse Weather Conditions Timescales**

As stated in the Estates Procedures, Campus Watch will contact the on-call Estates Duty Manager at **6.00am** to discuss severe weather conditions.

Grounds Maintenance staff will endeavour to start salting and clearing roads and paths by **6.30am** Monday to Friday (depending on how quickly Grounds staff are able to reach the campus in extreme conditions).

The Press Office will provide an initial update on Campus online to all staff regarding weather conditions and any impact on service provision by **7.00am** and will update this information as needed throughout the day.

Staff members should contact their line manager within one hour of their normal commencement time to advise their individual circumstances and to agree how to treat any necessary absence from work.

## **9. External Weather and Transportation Websites**

Southeastern Trains

- News: <http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/news/latest-news/>
- Live progress tracking: <http://www.journeycheck.com/southeastern/>

Stagecoach East Kent

- Latest affected routes:  
<http://www.stagecoachbus.com/serviceupdatedetails.aspx?Id=387>

BBC weather and travel for Kent

- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/kent/hi/people\\_and\\_places/nature/newsid\\_8418000/8418864.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/kent/hi/people_and_places/nature/newsid_8418000/8418864.stm)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/travelnews/kent/>

## **12. Other Relevant Policies/Documents**

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- [Snow, Ice and Associated Low Temperatures Policy](#)
- Estates Department Procedure for Dealing With Ice and Snow Conditions on the Canterbury Campus
- Estates Department Procedure for Dealing With Ice and Snow on the Medway Campus