



Armthorpe  
Academy  
*Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions*

# Armthorpe Academy



## Closure Procedure and Snow Plan

January 2021



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**Consilium**  
Academies



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## 1.0 Overview

Our aim is to maintain normal academy opening hours at all times of the year. Inevitably however, there will be occasions due to severe weather conditions or other circumstances out of the academy's control that will cause disruption. Whilst it is understood that closure can inconvenience parent/carers in making alternative arrangements, there will be occasions when closure is necessary to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Following the enforced initiation of remote learning platforms to manage extended periods of closure due to COVID, the decision has been taken to move to home learning days for all students when there is a reasonable and foreseeable risk of weather disruption. This will allow parent/carers time to make childcare arrangements, teachers time to structure appropriate activities and minimise disruption to learning, whilst most importantly safeguarding all our school family.

## 2.0 Closure Decisions

A remote learning closure decision will be made by the Headteacher in conjunction with executive members of the trust normally with 24-48 hours' notice. The emergency closure decision either before or during the school day will be made by the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher or Business Support Officer in their absence, again in consultation with the Director of Education. The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Insufficient staff (DBS checked, first aid trained and fully qualified) can travel in to keep the school running safely.
- Meals cannot be offered.
- No member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) can be on site.
- Conditions on-site are considered too dangerous for the safety of students and staff, based on a risk assessment by the staff on-site. We will make every practicable effort to clear paths of snow, but the site is large, and it is not possible to clear all paths or confine students to one building.
- Conditions are, or are anticipated to later become, too hazardous for travel.

## 3.0 Emergency Closure Procedure

### 3.1 Heavy Snow or Other Circumstances Developing Overnight

If the academy is to close, a decision will be made as soon as it becomes clear that closure is necessary and the following will apply:

- Senior Caretaker and, where possible, member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to arrive at 06.15 to assess the site.
- The Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher/Business Support Officer) will decide by 06.45 based on a risk assessment made by members of staff who are on-site. The Headteacher will speak with the Director of Education at Consilium before a final decision is made.
- The closure will be communicated to all staff via text and email by 07:00.
- Notification on the school website, and a group text, will be sent from school to all parent/carers by 07.15. Although this will be sent, we cannot guarantee the arrival as this is dictated by the texting provider's server.
- The closure will be reported to the Local Authority by the Business Support Officer.
- Staff will set appropriate work for students to complete at home. This will be available via Teams on Office 365.



### 3.2 Emergency Closure During the School Day

If weather conditions deteriorate during the school day or there are other circumstances which require closure, the closure decision will be made by the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher/Business Support Officer in the Headteacher's absence) based on the potential safety risks of students and staff travelling home.

- The closure will be communicated via text, email and the website 30 minutes prior to closure.
- A group text will be sent from school to all parent/carers as soon as the decision is taken. Although this will be sent, we cannot guarantee the arrival as this is dictated by the texting provider's server.
- The closure will be reported to the Trust and the Local Authority.
- Emergency evacuation procedures will be implemented, as per prior agreement with parent/carers. Should parents wish to contact school to change the arrangements for a child leaving, they will be asked to do so by email. This cannot be guaranteed from the dismissal time. We cannot accept changes via social media.

The aim is to ensure an orderly, safe dismissal of the premises and students will not be allowed to leave school unless we have confirmed parental/carer permission to leave the premises safely. Based on parental pre-sought parental responses, students will be asked to wait in the following locations:

- **Sibling groups with permission to walk home - in the Sports Hall.**
- **Individual students with permission to walk home - in Activity Studio.**
- **Sibling groups and individuals being collected - in the Canteen.**

Students will be dismissed in an orderly manner, with a register taken on departure, to ensure we are aware of which students have left the site. Where possible staff will set appropriate work for students to complete at home.

### 3.3 Communications

Once a decision is made, the school switchboard is likely to be very busy and it may not be possible to contact us therefore we would ask parent/carers to use email as the main method of communication – this will be quicker and more efficient. The academy will make all practicable efforts to keep parent/carers informed of any closure during adverse weather conditions as early as possible. It is appreciated that such conditions and the uncertainty placed upon parent/carers can create difficulties. Parent/carers are expected to check the website and/or check texts and emails when closure is a possibility. In the event of an expected closure due to snow, parent/carers are asked not to telephone the school unnecessarily to leave the telephone line free for emergency use.

## 4.0 Remaining Open

### 4.1 Risk Reduction Measures

In the event of snow and the academy remaining open:

- Students are advised to wear more appropriate footwear to and from school and bring their school shoes in their bags.
- All Caretakers will be asked to arrive for the early shift on days where snow or ice are anticipated to be an issue to assist with clearing snow and gritting. The Senior Caretaker will secure the site at the end of the school day.
- Main pathways will be cleared and salted as soon as possible. Parent/Carers, students and visitors are advised to take care when moving around the school site.
- While the academy has no responsibility for footpaths to and from the school site, we will make the LA aware of any concerns regarding the condition of public pathways to and from the school site.



#### **4.2 Prioritisation of Routes**

Paths will be made as clear as possible. A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine the paths that should be cleared immediately and the ones that may be left until later. It may be necessary for some entrances or areas to be temporarily closed. This is achieved by suspending access to areas that continue to be a slip hazard after management have considered emergency escape routes. This information will be communicated to staff and students as soon as possible. Other areas that will be cleared as a priority are parking spaces provided for the disabled adjacent to premises entrances.

#### **4.3 Method of Clearance**

Major pathway of at least one metre wide will be cleared; this will allow suitable access for pedestrians and wheelchairs. Snow and ice will be completely removed using a snow scraper or shovel. Snow and ice will not be brushed or dissolved using hot water as this will make surfaces more hazardous. Once the path has been cleared, rock salt will be used to assist in providing extra grip. Paths will be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure re-freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred. Additional care will be taken when clearing sloping pathways and steps. It may be necessary for safety reasons, to consider the temporary closure of some non-essential areas of the school (e.g. steep pathways, car parks, etc.) to avoid risks to staff, students or visitors. An assessment of the site will be made by site staff in conjunction with the Business Manager and Headteacher. Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit, but generally attempts will not be made to clear car parking areas or spaces themselves, unless snow is so heavy that essential vehicles (e.g. emergency vehicles, delivery lorries etc.) are unable to gain access to the site. All persons clearing snow will be provided with suitable snow scrapers, shovels, rock salt, wear protective gloves, footwear and clothing and take regular breaks from the task. Where icicles present a risk to site users, they will be removed using safe systems of work.

#### **4.4 Student Supervision**

To manage students more effectively in snow, there will be a re-deployment of duty staff at break and lunchtimes. All staff should read and note the extreme weather arrangements below and assume these apply unless told otherwise:

- An announcement via email will be made that extreme weather arrangements apply.
- All members of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are required to be on duty in addition to the normal duty rota.
- If there is snow, all staff on duty will be expected to manage doors and corridors near to their duties and control the entry and exit of students from the building.
- All students are to remain inside at social times.
- During period one, staff are asked to remind students of the additional rules and safety considerations brought by extreme weather.
- Any serious incidents or potential problems should be reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Pastoral Team and Site Team as appropriate.
- Snowballing is not allowed and staff are to issue immediate sanctions for dangerous behaviour.
- All staff are asked to be proactive in moving students to and from lessons, particularly in the vicinity of the main exit points.

#### **4.5 Advice for Staff**

The aim is to continue to provide a service to the families and community despite weather conditions or other circumstances. The academy will remain open as normal except for extreme weather conditions and the expectation is that if safe to do so, staff are to make their way to school. Staff who drive to school may consider a different form of transport. The Headteacher will inform staff as soon as possible (by text and email) whether the school is to be closed. Although staff should assume the school is open, the decision will be communicated in the following way:



- The closure will be communicated via text, email and the website.
- A group text will be sent from school to all parent/carers and staff to arrive by 07.15. Although this will be sent, we cannot guarantee the arrival as this is dictated by the texting provider's server.
- The closure will be reported to Doncaster Local Authority and Greatest Hits Radio South Yorkshire and Hallam FM. The academy accepts that in the event of snow, staff may be delayed in arriving ontime. Please inform the school office of this as soon as possible and continue to update the school on your expected time of arrival within what is legal i.e. not using a mobile phone while driving. The school will undertake to ensure all classes are supervised by another member of staff.

#### **4.6 Parents Dropping Off**

Parents are asked to exercise extreme caution when dropping off or collecting students by car because of icy paths and pavements. At the end of the day, the students should be collected as usual but there will be no after-school clubs or staff meetings.

### **5.0 Internal Safety Measures / Checks When Remaining Open**

SLT and the Site Team will carry out continuous risk monitoring paying particular attention to:

- Main pathways, fire escapes and routes ensuring that they are cleared and salted as priority.
- Tree branches; heavy snow laying on branches can cause branches to break. Students and staff will be kept away from overhanging branches.

### **6.0 Responsibilities**

#### **6.1 Local Academy Board Responsibilities:**

- Monitor that the snow and ice procedure is being carried out.

#### **6.2 Headteacher / SLT Responsibilities:**

- Agree the winter plan for the school including snow and ice clearing procedure.
- Assess the site and making the closure decision.
- Ensure decisions are communicated and the appropriate plans are enacted.
- Carry out risk assessments throughout the day, where applicable.
- Ensuring adequate supervision of students especially at breaks and at lunchtime.
- Ensure a designated member of staff checks weather forecasts in advance.

#### **6.3 Business Support Officer Responsibilities:**

- Ensure the academy is fully equipped with appropriate snow clearing and protective equipment, and adequate stocks of rock salt and sand/grit etc.
- Rearrange site team shift patterns to ensure snow and ice clearance is undertaken at the earliest possible time.
- Rearrange site team duties to ensure snow and ice clearance is continued, should those usually responsible for the task be absent from work.
- Carry out a formal snow clearance/gritting risk assessment in advance of bad weather. The risk assessment is to include reference to prioritisation of routes, manual handling issues, equipment for staff and communication with staff, parent/carers and visitors as to the appropriate access routes to use during bad weather.
- Periodically reviewing the school's winter clearance procedure and gritting plan to ensure its adequacy and suitability.



#### **6.4 Caretaker Responsibilities**

- Ensure for the immediate clearance of snow and ice in designated areas, in line with school gritting plan.
- Ensure that equipment provided to clear snow and ice is adequate for the purpose and maintained in a satisfactory condition, supplies of rock salt and sand / grit mix should be monitored throughout the winter period and replenished promptly.
- Temporarily close access areas around the school in line with school procedure / gritting plan that are not to be cleared or are lower down the gritting schedule, such areas should be clearly marked (e.g. signage, tape etc).

#### **6.5 Headteacher's PA Responsibilities**

On being informed of the closure decision, by 7.00am to:

- Send a text/email to all staff, parent/carers and students informing them whether the site is open or closed.
- Contact LA and Greatest Hits Radio South Yorkshire and Hallam FM.
- Ensure the IT Manager updates the school website with the decision and all social media feeds as appropriate.

#### **6.6 All Staff Responsibilities:**

- Report to the Business Support Officer or Headteacher any situation where the recommended action contained within the school winter clearance procedure / gritting plan has not been carried out.
- Safeguard their own, colleagues' and students' health and safety in bad weather.
- Wear footwear and clothing appropriate to the conditions.

## Appendix A: Closure During the School Day Process

The closure decision will be made should the weather change significantly during the school day as outlined in Section 3.2 of the Snow Plan.

1. The decision will be taken by the Headteacher and Business Support Officer with a targeted closure time of an hour from the decision being made.
2. A text will be sent to parent/carers, the website and social media feeds updated 45 minutes prior to the closure time. During this time, parent/carers may email [academy-admin@armthorpeacademy.org.uk](mailto:academy-admin@armthorpeacademy.org.uk) if they wish to alter their child's collection arrangements from what is pre-agreed. The header should read SNOW.
3. Staff will be notified of the decision to close. Non-essential radio communication will be stopped at this point. Students will systematically be sent to dismissal venues by SLT in a calm and orderly manner.
4. Each student will have a sticker on the front page of their planner to indicate to their dismissal arrangements; the colour will match the dismissal venue. Dismissal registers will be ready in each venue prior to students being released from the site.

<u>Sticker</u>	<u>Dismissal Arrangement</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Staffing</u>	<u>Dismissal</u>
<b>1</b>	<i>Sibling groups with permission to walk home.</i>	<b>Sports Hall</b>	AHT (PD) Student Welfare Manager x 2	Students should sit quietly waiting for siblings. Once together form an orderly queue to register then leave via the fire door.
<b>2</b>	<i>Individual students with permission to walk home.</i>	<b>Activity Studio</b>	DHT (Q of E) Deputy DSL	Register then dismiss through the fire door, walking around the sports hall perimeter to the main entrance.
<b>3</b>	<i>Sibling groups and individuals being collected, either on foot or by car.</i>	<b>Canteen</b>	AHT (T&L) Attendance Officer SENCO	HT/DHT (B&S) – radio communication between outside and the canteen. Students dismissed as parents arrive – parents to remain in cars.

\* The BSO and site staff have no allocated role to ensure students can be safely dismissed from the site. All students will leave via the main gates, either directly from the main entrance (if being collected) or on a one-way loop from the Activity Studio/Sports Hall.

Teaching staff should help in venues or outside once classes are dismissed from their classrooms.

Once it is safe to do so, staff with the longest journeys home will be dismissed from the academy building first.