

Adverse Weather

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.



University of the
Highlands and Islands
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

ELT manager	Director of Finance
Responsible officer	Fred Fudge/Tracy Matheson
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First Review Date	
Date review approved by BoM	xxxxxx
Next Review Date	June 2019
Equality impact assessment	
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact	BoM
FF	01/11/15	Update	xxxxxxxx

1. Policy

West Highland College UHI recognises that adverse weather conditions may occasionally make working at a College Centre or travelling to a College Centre difficult. On these occasions, a decision on whether a College Centre will remain open during adverse weather conditions will be made by a designated person at each College Centre and then communicated to the College Principal or a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for authorisation.

West Highland College UHI will strive to maintain academic provision at each College Centre at all times during the academic year while taking due account of the personal safety of staff, students, internal partners or other customers of the College when adverse weather conditions prevail.

So that staff can attend their place of work and students can attend courses or College activities, it is the policy of the College that all Centres will try to remain open during times of adverse weather conditions, so far as this is reasonably practicable and without risk to personal safety.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees, students, internal partners and customers of West Highland College UHI during periods of adverse weather conditions.

2.2 This policy includes guidelines on non-attendance, late attendance and early departure and applies to all staff of West Highland College UHI (separate procedures apply in relation to student attendance).

2.3 College Managers will be responsible for the fair, reasonable and consistent application of this policy for all staff and for all situations involving adverse weather that may occasionally occur during the academic year.

3. Definitions

3.1 'Adverse weather' is defined as extreme weather conditions such as very high winds, heavy snow, icy conditions, dense fog, severe flooding etc. which could make working or travelling to a College Centre potentially unsafe.

3.2 'Closure' means the closure of College buildings to minimise the risk of injury to staff, students, internal partners and customers of the College at the location affected by the adverse weather and does not necessarily mean the closure of buildings at other College Centres which may not be affected by adverse weather.

3.3 'Travel' means the need for staff to attend a College Centre or College activity for their normal place of work, where adverse weather conditions may exist or are forecast.

4. College Responsibilities

4.1 Whenever reasonably practicable and safe to do so, College Centres will remain open for staff, students, internal partners and customers of the College who are locally based to a College Centre, providing that there is no foreseeable risk to personal safety due to adverse weather.

4.2 A designated person and a deputy designated person, will be identified at each College Centre by the College Principal so that an assessment of whether a College Centre should close during periods of adverse weather can be taken locally and then communicated to the College Principal or other member of the ELT for authorisation.

- 4.3 When an assessment is made that a Centre should close due to adverse weather conditions, the decision will be communicated immediately to the Principal or in the absence of the Principal, to a member of the ELT for authorisation and confirmation.
- 4.4 If a College Centre is to close due to adverse weather, every effort will be made by the Centre affected to ensure that staff and students are advised of the closure decision as soon as is reasonably practicable. The closure decision will be communicated to all parties through email, text messages, social media and local radio to raise awareness.
- 4.5 Where staff and/or students face particular difficulties in getting home due to adverse weather conditions, they will be allowed to leave early to minimise the risks of travelling during extreme weather.
- 4.6 A 'dynamic risk assessment' (a judgement at the time) will be undertaken by the designated person at each Centre within the framework and scope of a generic risk assessment i.e. where the risks associated with adverse weather have been previously identified and the precautions necessary in respect of health & safety during adverse weather have been documented.
- 4.7 As part of the dynamic risk assessment, the designated person at each College Centre will take account of adverse weather warnings which refer to the different level of weather warnings and plan action accordingly to minimise risk to personal safety. The warnings include the following guidance from the metrological office:
- Yellow Warning – be aware and plan ahead as severe weather is forecast
 - Amber Warning – be prepared as there is an increased likelihood of severe weather which could potentially disrupt travel and power supplies with the potential risk to life and property
 - Red Warning – take action as extreme weather is expected which could cause widespread damage to buildings, disruption to travel and power supplies and the risk to life is likely.
- 4.8 Once a decision to close a Centre has been taken and authorised, the decision will be communicated by the designated person to all relevant staff, students, internal partners and customers of the Centre affected as soon as possible taking due account of any evening classes and/or commercial courses that may be scheduled as well as the normal daytime classes.
- 4.9 College Managers will monitor any non-attendance, late attendance and/or early departure of staff due to adverse weather conditions.
- 4.10 When a Centre has been closed because of adverse weather, the Centre will reopen as soon as conditions improve and there is no longer a risk to personal safety. The decision to reopen a Centre will be communicated to all parties through email, text messages, the College website or local radio as appropriate.

5 Employee's Responsibilities

- 5.1 If an employee is unable to attend work at their normal start-time due to adverse weather, they have a responsibility to notify their Line Manager as soon as reasonably practicable of their late arrival or non-attendance.
- 5.2 All staff have a responsibility to make every effort, so far as is reasonably practicable, to attend their normal place of work but staff should not put themselves at risk during adverse weather conditions or when extreme weather warnings have been issued.
- 5.3 Staff who live near to their normal place of work should attend where it is reasonably practicable to do so but where staff are unable to attend their normal place of work and they live near another West Highland College Centre, they should attend that Centre if the weather conditions permit safe travel and the alternative Centre is open.

5.4 When adverse weather is forecast, staff, students, internal partners and other customers of the College should check email, text messages, listen to local radio, check the College website or contact the College by telephone to check if a Centre is to close.

5.5 When adverse weather is no longer a risk to personal safety, staff, students, internal partners and other customers of the College should check email, text messages, check the College website or listen to local radio to check when/if a College Centre is to reopen.

5.6 Staff should not leave their place of work early during adverse weather conditions without the prior approval of their Line Manager unless the closure of a Centre has been prior authorised by a Senior Manager.

6 Contacting College Centres During Adverse Weather Conditions

6.1 Up-to-date information on the closure or reopening of a College Centre during adverse weather conditions will also be available on the College website at: <https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/>

6.2. The College can also be contacted by telephone on: +44 (0)1397 874000 or by telephoning a local College Centre where up-to-date information can be obtained.

7 Changeable Weather Conditions

7.1 If weather conditions deteriorate during the daytime and after receiving advice from the emergency services, weather forecasters and/or bus companies, College Managers will ensure that members of staff and students from outlying areas are informed to return home early or to attend another College Centre where this is a viable option.

7.2 Should weather conditions improve during the day and they are not forecast to deteriorate again in the short term, staff should make every reasonable effort to travel to their normal place of work without putting themselves at risk of personal injury.

8 Payment for Days Lost Due to Adverse Weather Conditions

8.1 Where a member of staff has made every effort to attend their normal place of work or to attend an alternative College Centre during a period of adverse weather, and has telephoned or emailed their Line Manager to say that they are unable to attend because of the adverse weather conditions, the member of staff will receive their normal pay for that day on the prior authorisation of their Line Manager.

8.2 Where appropriate and agreed with their Line Manager, staff can consider 'working from home' or from an alternative College Centre if adverse weather has prevented them from attending their normal place of work.