

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY (Revised December 2022)

1. Introduction

The University recognises that on occasions travel to and from work may be adversely affected by extreme weather conditions. This policy sets out how the University will respond to such difficulties and provides clarity in relation to the respective responsibilities of the University and staff.

Each incidence of severe weather absence will be considered independently from any previous weather-related absence.

This policy applies to all members of staff.

2. Responsibilities of the University

2.1 Whilst the University expects staff to make every reasonable effort to be on campus to fulfil their duties, in hazardous conditions, staff are not expected to take unreasonable risks which may compromise their health or safety or that of others.

2.2 In the event that weather conditions deteriorate during the working day the University Secretary, or nominated deputy, will consider if it is necessary to advise staff on campus, to leave work early and will communicate this message to the University community.

2.3 Staff will not suffer any detriment for late arrivals or early departures resulting from severe weather conditions.

2.4 Line Managers should provide clear instructions to staff on reporting arrangements for occurrences of late or non-arrival due to severe weather conditions. If Line Managers themselves are unable to get to work they will inform their direct reports of this as soon as practicable

2.5 For those individuals whose roles enable them to work from home in accordance with the flexible work policy, they should inform their line managers if they propose to work from home on a day that falls outside their normal schedule of home working agreement. Further guidance on remote working is [available from the Directorate of Digital & Information Services](#).

2.6 In situations where it is not practical for staff to work from home and/or where the period of weather-related absence lasts for more than two working days due to ongoing severe weather conditions, staff should agree alternative arrangements with their Line Manager to cover any period of extended absence. For example:-

- (a) the possibility of redistribution of tasks, where feasible, to allow staff to work remotely
- (b) by making up the hours lost within an agreed timescale
- (c) by using accrued "flexi-time" (applies to professional staff only)
- (d) by using annual leave
- (e) by opting to take unpaid leave

2.7 All staff with any underlying medical condition will be expected to liaise closely with their line manager should there be specific support required and further flexibility in their working arrangements during periods of severe weather.

2.8 Staff on “flexi time” will be credited with their standard daily hours for days when they arrive late or leave early due to severe weather conditions.

3. Responsibilities of Staff

3.1 You are required to make every reasonable effort to be present at work if your role does not allow for flexible working. In severe weather conditions, you should consider the viability of alternative forms of transport or alternative routes to that which you normally use.

3.2 Should you be unable to attend work due to weather conditions, you must contact your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity via phone, email, Teams or other appropriate and agreed means to inform them of your decision. If your Line Manager is unavailable you should contact their nominated deputy.

3.3 Failure to notify your Line Manager that you are unable to attend work without a reasonable explanation may count as unauthorised absence and may result in the loss of pay. Circumstances may arise when you do not have access to any means of communication, e.g. power or telecommunications failure or if you are stranded on roads or railways. If such instances occur, there will be no detriment to you provided you report to your Line Manager as soon as practicably possible.

3.4 When you are unable to attend work due to severe weather, and where circumstances and the nature of the role permit, you should arrange to work from home. Where you already have a home working agreement in place, you should notify your line manager that you are moving your home working day or increasing your home working arrangement temporarily. Arrangements for home working should be agreed with your Line Manager. Should the severe weather persist, then you should agree ongoing arrangements with your Line Manager until it is possible to return to the workplace or to your normal pattern of working.

3.5 When there is no improvement in weather conditions resulting in a continued absence of more than one working day, you are expected to keep in regular contact with your Line Manager.

3.6 In circumstances where you are unable to attend work due to an unexpected disruption of arrangements for dependant family members, e.g. school closures, the [University's Arrangements for Special Leave - Urgent Domestic Distress](#) will apply in these circumstances.

4. Application of this Policy

This policy sets out a framework for addressing issues arising from severe weather. However, it is not possible to cover every eventuality and the University will provide additional guidance and advice to staff during periods of severe weather.

5. University Warm Space Availability

The University recognises that severe weather may result in power outages and where possible will make warm spaces, showers and power available to staff. This will be communicated to staff as appropriate.

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