

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

1. Introduction

The University recognises that on rare occasions there may be times when travel to and from work is 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 its 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 get to work, in hazardous conditions the University does not expect staff to take unreasonable risks which may compromise their health or safety.

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 to leave work early and will communicate this message to the University community.

2.3 The University will not enforce any detriment for late arrivals or early departures resulting from severe weather conditions.

2.4 Line Managers will provide clear instructions to staff on reporting arrangements for occurrences of late or non arrival due to severe weather conditions.

2.5 Line Managers will be expected to deal favourably with requests for home working¹ during periods of severe weather, where possible. Such requests will normally be granted for up to a maximum of two working days, should the severe weather persist during this period.

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 will be expected to agree alternative arrangements with their Line Manager to cover any period of extended absence. For example:-

- (i) by using annual leave
- (ii) by opting to take unpaid leave
- (iii) by using accrued "flexi-time" (applies to support staff only)
- (iv) by making up the hours lost within an agreed timescale

2.7 Line managers of disabled staff will be expected to liaise closely with these individuals to agree reasonable flexible 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.

¹ Further guidance and information on accessing both home and shared drives through the Virtual Private Network (VPN) can be obtained on the DIT Web Pages or by contacting the DIT Service Desk

3. Responsibilities of Staff

3.1 You are required to make every reasonable effort to get to work. In severe weather conditions, you should firstly consider the viability of alternative forms of transport or alternative routes to that which you normally use.

3.2 Should you decide that you are unable to attend work as the weather conditions would make travel unsafe, you must telephone your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity to inform him/her of your decision. If your Line Manager is not available you should contact his/her nominated deputy. If no one is available to speak to in person, you should leave a voicemail message for your Line Manager, including a contact telephone number. Members of staff with internet access should, at the earliest opportunity, email their Line Manager confirming any information given in a telephone message.

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. 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. Arrangements for home working should be agreed with your Line Manager for up to a maximum of two working days, should the severe weather persist during this period.

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 policy on **Special Leave** (see [Family Friendly Policies](#)) **Section 4 - 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.