



**YORKSHIRE  
CAUSEWAY  
SCHOOLS  
TRUST**

# **Extreme Weather Guidance for Schools**

Version 1.0

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## Introduction

This guidance sets out the considerations and procedures for Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust when extreme weather conditions may affect the safety of pupils, staff, and visitors. This includes snow, ice, very low or high temperatures, excessive rain, flooding, and severe wind.

This guidance aligns with national expectations from the Department for Education (DfE), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

This document sets out Trust expectations and minimum standards. Schools must comply with statutory requirements and this guidance unless a locally risk-assessed alternative approach is agreed with the Trust.

The health and safety of our school communities is our priority. This guidance applies to all Trust schools and should be read alongside individual school emergency and critical incident plans.

## Legal requirements and standards

The Trust will meet all relevant statutory duties, including:

- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) (duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others on site).
- [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#), requiring indoor temperatures to be “reasonable” and sufficient thermometers to be available for monitoring.
- [DfE emergency planning and response guidance](#) regarding adverse weather and continuity of learning.
- [UKHSA heat](#) and [cold weather](#) guidance, addressing specific risks to children, including young children and those with medical vulnerabilities.

This policy should be read alongside each school’s Emergency Plan, Health and Safety Policy, and Business Continuity Plan.

## Principles

Risk-based and proportionate decisions will be taken to maintain school operations wherever it is safe to do so. This reflects DfE’s expectation that schools should generally remain open and can normally manage hot weather safely.

Safety takes precedence: Pupils and staff must not be exposed to dangerous conditions (e.g., unsafe travel routes, unsafe temperatures, structural hazards).

Vulnerable pupils will receive enhanced consideration in line with UKHSA guidance on children with medical or additional needs.

**Local conditions vary:** Headteachers may implement school-specific control measures but must comply with this guidance and statutory requirements.

## Roles and responsibilities

**The Trust** is committed to

- providing strategic oversight and ensure consistency across the Trust.
- supporting schools in closure decisions and emergency arrangements.
- maintaining Trust-wide communication and escalation procedures.

**Headteachers** are responsible for

- assessing risks on their school sites, conducting risk assessments and implementing local controls
- monitoring weather alerts
- making operational decisions in consultation with the Trust.
- Identifying pupils who are clinically or socially vulnerable to extreme weather
- notifying students and parents/carers of any operational changes through the school's established communication channels.

**Site teams, or delegated staff member(s)** are responsible for

- inspecting the condition of buildings, grounds, heating systems, drainage and access routes
- monitoring indoor temperatures
- implementing control measures as required, such as gritting, hazard isolation and ventilation measures.
- reporting hazards promptly

**Staff** are required to

- adhere to instructions issued
- report any hazards or concerns promptly.
- Monitor pupils for signs of heat or cold-related illness in line with UKHSA guidance.

## Weather-specific considerations

### Very low temperatures, snow and ice

Follow UKHSA cold weather guidance, especially for children under 5 and medically vulnerable pupils.

**Control Measures:**

- Maintain indoor temperatures at a reasonable level (minimum 16°C in classrooms).
- Check boilers, insulation, pipework to avoid failure and leaks.
- Grit priority routes and isolate unsafe areas.
- Minimise transitions between buildings; allow warmer clothing.
- Monitor vulnerable pupils for respiratory or cold-related health risks.
- Outdoor activities should be limited for younger pupils (especially under-5s) in prolonged cold or icy conditions, in line with UKHSA guidance.

**Triggers:**

- Met Office cold weather alerts.
- Heating failure resulting in indoor temperatures below thresholds:
  - **Below 16°C** – partial closure considered
  - **Below 13°C** – strong presumption for closure unless repairs are imminent

These thresholds should guide decision-making but must be considered alongside other factors (duration, building condition, vulnerability of pupils).

### Very high temperatures/Heatwaves

Schools must implement the following in line with DfE and UKHSA advice:

**Control Measures:**

- Open windows early, closing them when outdoor air becomes warmer than indoor air.
- Use blinds/curtains to reduce solar gain without obstructing ventilation.
- Limit electrical heat sources (lights, devices in standby).
- Ensure pupils and staff have frequent access to drinking water; encourage increased intake. Create water stations where appropriate.
- Allow relaxed uniform (lighter clothing, hats) and encourage shade and sunscreen.
- Restrict strenuous PE when temperatures exceed 30°C in line with DHSC recommendations.
- Mechanical fans may be used only below 35°C, as above this they may worsen dehydration.
- Activate additional monitoring for heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke symptoms.
- CO<sub>2</sub> monitors may help schools maintain ventilation safely in extreme conditions.

**Triggers:**

- Met Office **Heat-Health Alerts** (Yellow/Amber/Red).
- UKHSA Heat Guidance for Schools.

***Please see APPENDIX TWO – Example hot weather risk assessment***

### Heavy rain and flooding

**Control measures:**

- Evacuate flooded areas and assess structural safety before re-entry.
- Close off waterlogged or unsafe external areas.
- Consider closure if access routes are unsafe or essential facilities are compromised.

**Triggers:**

- Monitor local road conditions and Environment Agency flood alerts.

### High winds and storms

**Control Measures:**

- Conduct pre and post-storm tree inspections in accordance with HSE's expectations for managing site hazards.
- If there are any concerns regarding stability, fallen branches, or changes to root plates, the area must be cordoned off and reported immediately to an arboriculture contractor so they can assess safety before areas are reopened.
- Keep pupils indoors during high wind periods

**Triggers:**

- Met Office Alerts (Yellow/Amber/Red).

***Please see APPENDIX THREE: Tree Safety Checklist***

### Supporting vulnerable pupils

Each school must maintain a register identifying pupils at higher risk (e.g., medical needs, SEND, mobility issues). This requirement is supported by UKHSA guidance on managing heat and cold with clinically vulnerable children.

Schools must:

- Consult clinical advice where applicable.
- Conduct individual risk assessments where necessary and implement personalised control measures (cooler rooms, reduced exposure, additional supervision).

### Decision-making on partial or full closure

Headteachers have the authority to decide whether to close their school or implement modified arrangements. Schools should remain open wherever risks can be controlled. This reflects DfE's position that closures due to heat should generally be avoided.

The Trust CEO/COO should be informed immediately of any decision to close or significantly alter operations, and may provide support and coordination across the trust

A decision to close a school, either partially or fully, will only be made where:

- It is unsafe for pupils or staff to attend.
- The school cannot meet minimum staffing, safeguarding, or supervision requirements.
- The site cannot provide essential facilities (e.g. heating, water, electricity).

- The ability to deliver teaching and learning is significantly compromised.

Where closure is required, the school will:

- Notify parents, carers, and staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure continuity of education through remote provision where reasonably practicable
- Liaise with the Trust regarding reopening plans.

Headteachers must keep a brief written record of the rationale for closure or partial closure decisions, including risk factors considered.

Safeguarding arrangements must remain effective at all times, including during partial closure or remote learning.

## Communication

Schools must provide timely, clear updates via text, email, school apps, websites and social media, including:

Message content should include:

- Clear statement of whether school is open, closed, or partially open
- Reason for decision
- Arrangements for pupils (including meals, remote learning)
- Expected duration
- When next update will be provided

Staff must be informed of weather related- health alerts (Met Office & UKHSA), and Headteachers must also ensure staff should know who to contact for urgent concerns during extreme weather.

Where possible, closure decisions should be communicated by 7.30am to support families in making arrangements.

## Staff attendance

Staff should make reasonable efforts to attend work during adverse weather however, if travel is genuinely unsafe, staff should contact their headteacher as early as possible

Schools should apply discretion and consider individual circumstances, and refer to staff contracts and trust policies on adverse weather pay arrangements

## Reviewing arrangements

Following any incident of extreme weather, schools should review their preparedness, decision making, and operational response. The purpose of this review is to identify what worked well, highlight any areas for improvement, and ensure lessons learned are incorporated into future planning.

Schools should consider:

- Effectiveness of local procedures, including gritting plans, site checks, communication protocols, and staffing arrangements.
- Timeliness and clarity of decision making, particularly regarding opening, partial closure, or early dismissal.
- Communication with parents, staff, and the Trust, including whether messages were clear, timely, and accessible.
- Safeguarding and supervision, ensuring all pupils remained safe throughout the event.
- Any barriers encountered, such as equipment shortages, site access issues, or inconsistent transport arrangements.
- Wellbeing considerations, including the impact on staff workload and any additional support required.

A brief written record of the review should be completed and shared with the Trust. Schools should update their local emergency, site, or weather specific plans accordingly so that arrangements continue to improve over time.

The Fellowship of All Saints an North Rigton CE Primary Schools  
This appendix must be completed by each school and reviewed annually

## APPENDIX ONE: Quick guide: - Arrangements for specific weather scenarios

### Snow and Ice

#### Before the school day:

- Site teams should assess premises by 7.00am
- Priority areas for gritting/clearing include main entrances, fire exits, accessible routes between buildings, car parks  
PATHS - should be made as clear as possible. A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine the paths that should be cleared immediately and the ones that may be left until later (gritting plan by use of colour coded clearance routes). With this in mind it may be necessary for some entrances/areas to be temporarily closed; this is achieved by taping off areas that continue to be a slip hazard as long as management have given consideration to emergency escape routes. This information should be communicated to staff & parents as soon as possible.  
OTHER AREAS - In addition to pathways/agreed access areas, in all cases access pathways should be cleared from parking spaces provided for the disabled, adjacent to premises entrances]
- Headteacher to make decision on opening by 7.30am

#### During the school day:

- Monitor weather forecasts continuously
- If conditions deteriorate, consider early closure with sufficient notice to parents (minimum 2 hours where possible)
- Ensure safe transport arrangements before releasing pupils
- Limit outdoor activities especially for younger pupils (especially under-5s)

### Very Low Temperatures (Heating Failure)

If heating systems fail and temperatures drop below reasonable levels:

#### 1. Immediate actions:

- Contact heating engineers/contractors immediately ASKO – Tetleys, NRP - HCS
- Monitor temperatures in all teaching spaces using thermometers
- Assess whether building can be safely occupied

#### 2. If temperatures below 16°C:

- Consider partial closure
- Provide additional heating where safe to do so

- Allow staff and pupils to wear outdoor clothing
- Reduce physical activity requirements
- Provide hot drinks where appropriate

**3. If temperatures below 13°C:**

- Strong presumption of closure unless repairs imminent
- Consider alternative accommodation within the trust if available

## High Temperatures and Heatwaves

Staff wellbeing and reasonable adjustments (including menopause or other medical conditions) must be considered during high-temperature periods.

**Preventative measures:**

- Ensure adequate ventilation in all teaching spaces
  - Windows should be opened first thing and then closed during the day to keep out hot air
  - Fans are generally not considered suitable above very high temperatures as they only serve to move hot air around
  - CO<sub>2</sub> monitors may help schools maintain ventilation safely in extreme conditions.
- Provide access to drinking water throughout the day
- Close blinds/curtains to reduce solar gain
- Identify which areas of the schools are 'hot spots' i.e., south facing, consider moving students from these classrooms to 'cooler zones' where appropriate
- Adjust timetables to avoid strenuous activity during hottest periods
- Consider earlier start times or modified school day
- Relax uniform requirements (communicate clearly to parents)
- Encourage use of sun protection, especially for outdoor activities (communicate to parents)
- Identify and monitor vulnerable pupils and staff (medical conditions, SEND)

***ACTION: Complete APPENDIX TWO – Example hot weather risk assessment***

## Excessive Rain and Flooding

**Monitoring:**

- Check Environment Agency flood warnings
- Assess site drainage and any water ingress

- Monitor local road conditions and transport disruptions

**Actions if flooding affects the site:**

- Evacuate affected areas immediately
- Ensure safe access and egress routes remain available
- Contact emergency services if required
- Assess structural safety before reoccupying
- Consider closure if safe operation cannot be maintained

**Actions if flooding affects access:**

- If significant numbers of staff or pupils cannot safely travel, consider closure
- Communicate alternative arrangements for pupils who can attend

## Severe Wind

**Before and during:**

- Site inspection conducted by Caretaker/Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/Business Manager to look for loose items, damaged structures, fallen trees at regular intervals throughout the day
- The Tree Safety Checklist (APPENDIX THREE) to be completed by Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/Business Manager ahead of the forecasted severe weather and again afterward.
- Keep pupils indoors during break/lunch if wind speeds dangerous
- Avoid areas near trees, temporary structures, or damaged buildings
- Monitor weather warnings from the Met Office

## Communication in the event of a full or partial closure:

- Parents to be notified via Email and In-App text through Arbor] by [Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher
  - Staff to be notified via Email by Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher]
  - Local authority to be informed through Email by [Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/Business Manager/Office Manager]
  - Trust central team to be informed via [admin@ycst.co.uk](mailto:admin@ycst.co.uk) / 01423 818508 by [Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/Business Manager/Office Manager
-

## APPENDIX TWO - Example Hot weather risk assessment

This risk assessment responds to Met Office Amber or Red heat alerts and prolonged periods of high temperature (above 30°C). Although it is generally accepted that people work best at a *temperature* between 16°C and 24°C, there is no specific legal maximum working temperature. The temperature of the workplace is one of the potential hazards that employers should address to meet their legal obligations.

RISK: Adverse reaction to extreme weather (high temperature)			
Hazard and Related Condition / Activity	Persons at Risk	Existing Control Measures	Actions for Staff
<p>Risk of heatstroke/sunstroke – symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high body temperature – a temperature of, or above, 40°C (104°F) is a major sign of heatstroke</li> <li>• red, hot skin and sweating that then suddenly stops</li> <li>• fast heartbeat</li> </ul>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily temperature monitoring</li> <li>• Staff and student awareness</li> <li>• Parental email sent to request that students bring a refillable water bottle – students encouraged to drink cool water (such as water from a cold tap, water cooler or fountain)</li> <li>• Encouraging/Reminding parents to apply sunscreen with appropriate levels of factor protection before the start of the school day</li> <li>• Providing sun cream for pupils to use (subject to parent permission)</li> <li>• Increased water access</li> <li>• Students re-roomed to cooler rooms/spaces where deemed necessary</li> <li>• List of ‘cool rooms’ maintained</li> <li>• Communal ‘cool zones’ set up for students and staff</li> <li>• A reminder of the key strategies for keeping the rooms cool sent to staff (blinds down and windows open as soon as possible before the heat builds, doors open, lights off, and equipment turned off)</li> <li>• Casual dress code agreed during Met Office amber/red alerts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff Actions / Communication:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor pupils for symptoms</li> <li>• Report incidents promptly to First Aider/Nurse</li> <li>• Implement classroom cooling strategies (open windows early, blinds closed, lights and unnecessary devices turned off)</li> </ul> <p><b>SLT / Oversight:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT temperature review points (10am, 1pm)</li> <li>• Regular review of Met Office alerts</li> <li>• Temporary timetable adjustments considered</li> </ul>

Hazard and Related Condition / Activity	Persons at Risk	Existing Control Measures	Actions for Staff
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student authorised to attend in PE kit in Met Office red alerts</li> <li>• Headwear encouraged for outside to provide sun protection</li> </ul>	
<p>Risk of heat exhaustion – symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tiredness</li> <li>• dizziness</li> <li>• headache</li> <li>• nausea</li> <li>• vomiting</li> <li>• hot, red and dry skin</li> <li>• confusion</li> </ul>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aiders prepared to act quickly (cooling, hydration, medical response)</li> <li>• PE curriculum adjusted to reduce exertion and stay indoors</li> <li>• Hot equipment use minimised in Science, Food Tech, and DT for example</li> <li>• Use air cooling where possible in Met Office red alerts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff Actions / Communication:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness via briefing notes and staff briefings</li> </ul> <p><b>SLT / Oversight:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science/DT leads to pause high-heat activities during peak hours</li> <li>• SLT to monitor adherence to modified PE plans</li> </ul>
Risk of classrooms and/or offices overheating	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open windows as early as possible in the morning before the start of the school day, and leave them open after school to allow stored heat to escape from the building</li> <li>• Windows are closed during mid-day peak temperatures if the external air is warmer</li> <li>• Lighting and devices are turned off when not in use</li> <li>• Adjust teaching to cooler rooms or shaded spaces</li> <li>• Avoid direct sunlight exposure (rearranged seating layout)</li> <li>• Oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C – <u>at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff Actions / Communication:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform students of where ‘cool zones’ are available</li> <li>• Promote a ‘cooling break’ protocol for all staff if Met office red alert</li> </ul> <p><b>SLT / Oversight:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher to consider temporary amendments to the school day if persistent</li> </ul>

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Hazard and Related Condition / Activity	Persons at Risk	Existing Control Measures	Actions for Staff
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage regular hydration and light meals</li> <li>• Consider moving some lessons outside in the shade</li> <li>• Encourage the use of high-SPF sun cream</li> </ul>	overheating occurs in Met Office red alert conditions
Risk of heat exhaustion and excessive UV exposure whilst undertaking physical exercise during P.E. lessons / extra-curricular	All	<p>During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C</li> <li>• Students will be provided with access to plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap, water cooler or fountain) and be encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot</li> <li>• PE shall limit the curriculum to low-energy activities and will remain indoors (i.e. yoga, penalty shootout, basketball shootout out etc)</li> </ul>	Communication from SLT concerning measures

Hazard and Related Condition / Activity	Persons at Risk	Existing Control Measures	Actions for Staff
Risk of heat exhaustion and excessive UV exposure whilst attending off-site trips/visits	Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather conditions shall be considered when deciding the suitability of all trips/visits.</li> <li>• The specific risk assessment will be evaluated</li> <li>• All attendees will be encouraged to take increased quantities of water and keep hydrated</li> <li>• All attendees shall be encouraged to dress appropriately to the weather and activity – this will include a sun hat where appropriate</li> <li>• All attendees will be encouraged to wear high-factor sun lotion and to reapply throughout the day as per the manufacturer's guidance</li> <li>• Postponement of a trip/visit will be considered if suitable control measures cannot be put in place</li> </ul>	EVC to monitor trips/educational visits
Risk of heat exhaustion and excessive UV exposure whilst partaking in facilities hire/lettings activities	External Hirers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school shall evaluate the types of clubs on-site</li> <li>• Bookings involving vigorous physical activity shall be cancelled</li> <li>• Consideration shall be given to the closing of all bookings</li> </ul>	Cancel bookings of vigorous physical activity on very hot days
Risk of heat exhaustion whilst preparing food in the school's main kitchen	Catering Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning break offering is limited to cold food and drinks only</li> <li>• Staff encouraged to drink cold water more regularly</li> <li>• Access to cold tap water available in the kitchen - additional water station provided at the food court</li> <li>• Hot options reduced for lunch to limit heat exposure for the Catering team</li> </ul>	Menu review with a view to reduce hot food preparation and introduce more cold food options

**APPENDIX THREE: Tree safety checklist**

For use by site staff, headteachers or nominated staff

<b>School:</b>						
<b>Person completing check:</b>					<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Reason for check:</b>		<i>I.e., Routine monthly check or after strong winds or before forecast storms</i>				
		Visual check of all tree areas				Comments/Actions required
		Trees near entrances, paths and playgrounds	Trees near buildings and fences	Trees near car park or drop off areas	Trees on boundaries or over public footpaths	
Ground and base of tree						
Soil lifted or roots newly exposed	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Tree leaning more than usual	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Ground soft or washed away after heavy rain	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Trunk and main branches						
Cracks or splits	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
	No issues found					

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Loose bark or obvious decay	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Broken or hanging branches	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
<b>Canopy</b>						
Large dead branches	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Branches touching buildings, gutters or play equipment	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					
Fallen branches on ground	No issues found					
	Monitor on next check					
	Temporary barrier or clear up required					
	Arrange arborist inspection					

**Immediate hazards**

If any of these are seen, take action straight away.

- Branch hanging and could fall
- Tree or large branch already fallen
- Tree appears unstable after storm
- Tree damage affecting safe access or safeguarding

**If yes to any of these:**

1. Create a temporary exclusion zone
2. Report to Trust Estates Manager immediately
3. Request arborist attendance through school office

**Sign off:**

Signature:		Logged on the Trust Compliance System:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Followed up required:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Follow up date:	