



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Guidance on Failure to Attend Work Due to Bad Weather

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1. Introduction

Employees have a contractual duty to attend for work and every reasonable attempt must be made to reach their place of employment on any working day. The aim of this guidance is to ensure that consistent and fair practice is adopted throughout the Council in situations where adverse weather conditions affect an employee's ability to attend or remain at work. There will inevitably be occasions when weather conditions are so severe that some employees will either be prevented from getting to work or will be late and/or need to leave work early.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development will be responsible for obtaining information and advice from the Police, Motoring Organisations and Transport Authorities and disseminating it to a nominated representative of the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The CMT representative will decide on whether this guidance will apply on any particular day based on the information obtained.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all Council employees, including Teachers.

3. Arrangements for a failure to attend work

In a circumstance of an employee being unable to attend work due to adverse weather conditions, they must report the fact to their line manager at the earliest opportunity. There is **no automatic entitlement** to paid leave of absence in this circumstance. Normally, the employee will be required to use flexi leave, annual leave or have the time regarded as authorised unpaid leave to cover the absence or agree with their line manager how the lost time can be made up at a later date.

Alternatively, working from home may be granted, but this would only apply where

- the employee is able to perform the duties of their role from home, and
- sufficient work is available to be completed at home, and
- the nature of the duties to be undertaken are suitable for home working.

Consideration can also be given as to whether it was feasible for an employee to report for work at an alternative Aberdeen City Council location/site. Again, this would depend on the availability of suitable duties and on whether the particular site could accommodate an additional employee(s). Both scenarios above would require prior management authority.

4. Lateness for work

Where the Director is satisfied that an employee has genuinely been prevented from attending work by their normal starting time due to bad weather, any lateness will be ignored. The employee will be credited with the lost time calculated on the difference

between their actual arrival time and their scheduled or normal start time, including those on flexi time.

5. The Need to Leave Work Early

The Director will be responsible for deciding whether any request to leave work early is warranted, bearing in mind the information provided by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the home address, mode of travel and personal circumstances of the employee concerned. Where the Director is satisfied that early release is justified, the employee will be credited with a normal standard day. For an employee on flexi time this would be to the end of their normal finishing time.

6. School closures in general

In a situation where an employee's child/children is/are unable to attend school due to a school closure as a result of bad weather but where the employee is able to attend work, Directors will have discretion to grant the employee up to one day's paid special leave if he/she is satisfied that the employee has been unable to organise alternative childcare arrangements at short notice. This assumes that the employee has principal caring responsibility for the child/children. Other similar scenarios concerning dependant relatives can be considered in terms of the Compassionate Leave provision within the Special Leave policy.

7. School Based staff

7.1 School Open

In a situation where a school is open but staff cannot attend due to adverse weather the arrangements in paragraph 3 of this guidance will apply. In respect of Teachers who have class contact time scheduled on such a day the Teacher can opt to "pay back" scheduled class contact hours for the day(s) they are unable to attend due to adverse weather. The "pay back" arrangements of making up the lost time will be done by agreement with the Headteacher of the school. For any remaining hours that are not scheduled as class contact the Teacher may undertake these at a time and place of their choosing, in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 3.10 of the SNCT terms and conditions of employment. Where a teacher is unable or opts not to "pay back" the lost time, there would normally be a deduction from pay in respect of the lost class contact time only.

7.2 School closed to pupils but open to staff

Where a decision is taken to close a school to pupils due to adverse weather, but to keep it open to staff who can travel to the school safely the provisions of paragraph 3 of this guidance apply for anyone unable to attend work due to adverse weather conditions. Teachers, in accordance with paragraph 3.10 of the SNCT terms and conditions of employment, can elect to work at home or a place of their choosing. This is on the assumption that they have sufficient work to undertake and the Head Teacher does not

require them to report to the school to participate in a 'whole school' activity. Where a teacher elects to work at home or a place of their choosing due to adverse weather conditions, they must inform their line manager of their intention in this respect.

7.3 School Closed

In the unusual situation where a school is closed to both pupils and staff and the employee is available for work, they will be requested by their Head Teacher to report for duty to an alternative Council location which will normally be to another school where practicable (but could be to an administrative location where this was not practicable). An alternative for teachers is to elect to work at home or a place of their choosing.

Only where this was not possible with all other reasonable options exhausted, would a day's special leave with pay be granted.

8. Disputes

Where an employee is dissatisfied with the decision made by their manager under these arrangements for bad weather, they should raise this with their Service Manager and if this does not resolve the matter to their satisfaction the employee may wish to use the appropriate organisational process.

9. Responsibilities

Employee's responsibilities;

- To contact their line manager as soon as possible to inform of any non-attendance for work due to adverse weather conditions.
- To discuss options with their line manager on how an absence will be regarded i.e. flexi, annual, unpaid leave or agreeing an arrangement to make the lost time up at a later date.
- To determine whether it is safe travel to work during periods of adverse weather, it being the responsibility of each individual employee to make the decision in respect of their personal safety.

Manager's responsibilities;

- To consider the reason for non-attendance and discussing and approving the appropriate alternative arrangement e.g. granting of annual leave, flexi leave or unpaid leave, working from home, or an arrangement for the lost time to be made up at a later date (including lost class contact time for Teachers).

n.b. it is not for managers to give advice on whether a journey to work is safe or not, this being a decision of the individual employee.