




Emergency Closure Policy

September 2025

Signed (Chair of Trustees):	
Date:	September 2025
Date of Review:	September 2026

The Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.

The aim of this policy is to ensure staff respond effectively to an emergency at school or on an educational visit. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Health and Safety
- Child Protection
- Evacuation Plans

This policy covers potential incidents that could occur, including:

- serious injury to a pupil or member of staff (e.g. transport accident)
- Heating/plumbing defects
- significant damage to school property (e.g. fire)
- criminal activity (e.g. bomb threat)
- severe weather (e.g. flooding, snow)
- public health incidents (e.g. flu pandemic)
- the effects of a disaster in the local community

Emergencies that occur outside of School Hours

This policy covers procedures for incidents occurring during and outside school hours, including weekends and holidays. This also covers procedures for extended services, such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, holiday activities and cleaners.

The planning process

Preparing for emergencies is an ongoing process involving:

- risk assessment
- planning
- training
- exercises
- reviewing

Throughout each stage of this process members of staff and governors are consulted to gain their involvement and support. In some cases, other schools are consulted to ascertain the local response to the emergency and whether other schools are closing. In the event of emergency, we follow in the first instance, guidance available from Waltham Forest Local Authority and Hackney Local Authority.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment is conducted in the event of any emergency. Generic risk assessments are made for common emergencies such as:

- flooding
- severe weather
- criminal activity

And should be referred to before any decision is made in the event of an emergency.

Heating/ Plumbing defects

In cases of partial or complete failure of the heating/plumbing system the Chair of the Local Governing Board and the Trust board members will be informed. The CEO and the Chair of the Trust board will decide on closure where the ambient temperature is low (below 16 degrees Celsius inside school). The same procedure as for severe weather will be used.

Fires/ Explosions

Evacuation procedures are in line with the schools Fire and Evacuation Procedure and will be used in the case of sudden emergency.

Severe weather

During severe weather conditions, such as flooding or snow, we aim to keep the school open for as many children as possible. However, it might be necessary to close temporarily due to inaccessibility or risk of injury. Where there is a need for school closure, we will do all we can to reopen as soon as possible. The decision to close the school is made by the CEO and Chair of the Trust Board and the Trust board members and members of the local governing board are informed. Following this, the local authority is informed of the type of closure- full or partial and the reason for closure. Where flooding has significantly affected the school, we will contact the DFE's incident alert team by emailing incident.alert@education.gov.uk

Communication

We recognise that communication during an emergency is key to preventing further risk and prolonged closure. In the event of any emergency, text messages using the school's text message service will be sent to parents and staff informing them of the emergency and the school's response. The school's websites will also be updated to share information about the emergency and to inform people in the event of a school closure. Where possible, we will also alert the local press and radio stations.

School attendance statistics

Where children are unable to get to school due to severe weather conditions, they are marked in the register using absence code 'Y'. This means that their absence won't affect the school's and the pupil's attendance figures.

Staff absence

The safety of all members of the school community is of paramount importance and staff will not be asked to travel in situations that could put them at risk of danger. In the event that some staff cannot get to work, we will be flexible in our approach, by example:

- bringing together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together
- using other school staff to provide cover supervision or oversee alternative activities
- re-arranging the curriculum

Reception and other infant classes (children aged 5, 6 or 7) should normally be groups of 30 or fewer, but having more than 30 in one class due to temporary exceptional circumstances is not a reason to close the school or the class.

In the event that the school is closed and staff cannot get to work, we expect them to complete appropriate duties in relation to their role and responsibilities at home. These include:

- marking and planning;
- data analysis
- action planning
- contacting people
- sending emails
- or any other reasonable request

Exam disruption

We prepare for possible disruption to exams as part of our emergency planning and we ensure all staff are aware of these plans. If we have to close the school, or if a child misses an exam due to an emergency. We will contact the STA and discuss alternative arrangements such as:

- using alternative venues
- an exam result being generated, based on factors such as a child's performance on other assessments in the same subject
- the opportunity for children to sit any missed exam at an alternative time.

We share any alternative arrangements with parents and children.

Useful websites:

www.walthamforest.gov.uk

<https://education.hackney.gov.uk>

www.arboracademytrust.co.uk

www.davieslane.co.uk

www.selwynprimarywaltham.co.uk

www.woodfordgreenprimaryschool.co.uk

www.northwoldschool.com