



**South Tyneside College**

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## **SEVERE WEATHER and DISRUPTIONS to PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICY**

This policy is available on-line at: [www.stc.ac.uk](http://www.stc.ac.uk)

- We will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format or language. Please contact: Director of HR
- We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. We welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of this policy.
- All our policies are subject to equality impact assessments\*. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wishes to contribute to these impact assessments. Please contact: Director of HR

Approved by	Version	Issue Date	Review Date	Contact Person
JCC, SEG	Version 1	October 2014	October 2017	Director of HR

**POLICY NUMBER: 81**

# Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all staff employed by South Tyneside College (STC). The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach of the College when severe

weather occurs and public transport is disrupted, making it difficult for staff to attend their place of work.

# Definition of Severe Weather

It is not possible to be specific in defining severe weather. However, this

Policy is designed to address situations when severe weather causes significant disruption to transport.

# Responsibilities of the Employee

Employees are expected to make every effort to get to work, even if there is severe weather. However, employees

should not take any action which would potentially endanger themselves or any other person(s).

# Alternative Working due to Travel Disruption

If employees cannot use their normal mode of transport because the weather has caused disruption, the College requires them to explore other ways they could travel to work safely. For example, if an employee normally drives to work but roads are closed due to heavy snow, the employee could explore whether any public transport, such as a train route, could be used instead.

Consideration may be given to the following alternatives but it should be noted that in all cases, without exception, authorisation must be given by the appointed line manager, Head of School/Service or Director:

Where employees arrive late for work as a result of disruption to their travel arrangements, the College will allow employees to arrive as soon as they can

and potentially leave earlier, for example, if public transport schedules are disrupted, or there is a threat of closure of services or roads that could prevent employees being able to get home safely.

Employees may attend for work at another site of the College closer to home if it is easier for them to get to that site and there is work for them to do from that site.

It may be possible for some employees to work from home. However, it is expected that they will have made efforts to attend for work in the first instance. Employees must contact their line manager to discuss and agree any work that could be usefully completed at home. However, if alternative working arrangements are not possible then employees must take annual leave or time off in lieu (TOIL). TOIL must have already been accrued and agreed.

# Time off for Dependants

Employees have a statutory right to take unpaid time off work to deal with emergencies involving a dependant. Such emergencies could arise as a result of the adverse weather. Employees are entitled to take reasonable time off during working hours to take action that is necessary:

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted.
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- in consequence of death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant; or,
- to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment which the child attends is responsible for them.

A dependant can include:

- a husband, wife, civil partner or partner

- a child of the employee
- a parent of the employee
- a person who lives in the same household as the employee (but not an employee, tenant or lodger) or
- anyone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance when they fall ill, are injured, or to make arrangements for care e.g. a neighbour or family member.

In normal circumstances the College Special Leave Policy should be followed however, during adverse weather, emergencies could include a dependant being injured, unexpected disruption or breakdown of an employee's childcare arrangements, or schools closing unexpectedly.

Employees in this situation must inform the College as soon as possible and will be entitled to reasonable time off to deal with the emergency or make any arrangements that are needed. This right applies to all employees regardless of length of service. Time off in these circumstances will be paid for the first day to enable the employee to make necessary alternative arrangements. Further time off for the same emergency will be unpaid. Any arrangements agreed on this basis must have the appropriate authorisation from the line manager, Head of School/Service or Director.

# Closure Announcements

In the case of severe weather some operation of the College might be forced to close, meaning that some employees are not required to attend work. The decision to close any operation of the College will be taken by the Chief Executive or Deputy. This decision will be communicated to employees through a number of mechanisms.

A message will be placed on the College Intranet and Internet site advising of the closure. The College switchboard will also provide a message advising of the closure to all incoming callers. A cascade arrangement will be used to inform staff as follows:

In a cascade approach the Head of School will contact a number of individuals who then contacts others,

passing the message down the department until everyone has been contacted. The cascade approach should be tested twice a year.

To check that the cascade works, a Head of School/Service will pass a message to the entire School through the cascade. This should take place out of working hours – typically during one evening. The following day, the Head of School will check whether all members of the School received the message. If they did not, this will highlight any weaknesses in the cascade (e.g. out of date contact details, new starters not included on the cascade). Any weaknesses in the cascade must be addressed immediately.

# Policy Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in light of experience and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes as a result of experience and/or to employment legislation may prompt a

review of the policy before the end of the three year period.

On considering the effectiveness of this policy, consultation will be undertaken with the trade unions, staff and managers to assist in the policy review and monitoring of the policy.