**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES**

**SEVERE WEATHER POLICY & OPERATIONAL PLAN**

**(“Snow Plan”)**

**January 2019**

**Part One**

**Policy**

1.1 In the event of either national or local severe weather warnings, the University understands the difficulties that both staff and students can face in travelling to and from work/study. The University has arrangements to help, and these are outlined below.

1.2 Managers are asked to familiarise themselves with this procedure, advise staff and students of the key points and raise any initial queries with Deans or Directors as appropriate. They must ensure that appropriate lines of communication are established and responsibilities understood.

1.3 The University campuses will always be ‘open’ to a certain extent to provide basic catering and security services to our students, due to students living in residential accommodation and 24-hour security arrangements in place, particularly on Treforest campus. The only exception would be in the event of a catastrophic event that results in the need to evacuate the campus entirely.

1.4 The overriding objective of this policy is to ensure that the University remains as fully operational as practical for as long as possible to provide continuity of service (study and support services) to students in the event of severe weather. The decision to close will be made only if, in the opinion of senior management and based on the information available at the time, there is a serious risk to the health and safety of University staff and students.

1.5 Each campus will be treated individually, with any decision based on a local risk assessment. The decision to close one campus does not mean that all University campuses will be closed

1.6 In the case of severe weather, or other emergencies, there are two possible levels of closure depending upon whether or not there is residential accommodation on site:

1.6.1 The complete closure of a campus, which means the shutdown of the entire site. This is the most likely course of action at all sites other than Treforest.

1.6.2 The suspension of non-residential activities, which means the shutdown of the entire site other than accommodation and the necessary supporting services. This is the most likely course of action at Treforest.

1.7 Information on the process through which the decision is made on closure is detailed later in this policy. In the event of severe weather, if in doubt, members of staff and students should assume that the University is open until advised otherwise via official University communications channels.

1.7.1 The key communications channel is the main University website ([www.southwales.ac.uk](http://www.southwales.ac.uk)) and the main staff intranet site, ([thehub.southwales.ac.uk](https://thehub.southwales.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Section/Default.aspx?homepage=1&section=-1)) on which any decision to close will be posted as soon as practically possible. Social media *@UniSouthWales* and *@USWStaff* will link to this information. Information for students will be drawn from these sites and cascaded through student channels.

1.7.2 In the event of overnight snowfall, the communication will normally be posted on or just after 7am on the morning of the closure.

1.7.3 In the event of daytime snowfall, the communication will normally be posted as soon as possible once the decision has been taken by authorised staff.

1.7.4 In the event of overnight snowfall on a weekend (Friday night to Sunday morning), the communication will normally be posted on or just after 8am on the morning of the closure, with social media linking to those main announcement pages.

1.7.5 Updates regarding the status of the campuses following a closure and the likely timeframe for reopening will be posted periodically throughout the day on the main communications channels, with social media linking to those main announcement pages.

1.7.6 Decisions on whether or not the campus will reopen on the following day will be made and communicated as soon as possible, but no later than 7AM ON the DAY OF REOPENING

1.8 Staff should pay close attention to these communications and not assume that the University is closed for the entire day. Depending on the weather conditions, forecast and the advice of the local authorities, it may be practical to close the campus for half or part of a day.

1.8.1 Staff should continue to periodically check communications channels throughout the day and not assume that the University is closed for the entire day. This would not apply if the University activates the adverse weather policy and closes the campus(es) for the full day (1.6.1). As such, communications should be read carefully.

1.9 As a general rule, unless the University is closed, members of staff are expected to attend work. If an individual member of staff has specific concerns about travelling in adverse weather, but information available to the University is that travelling is possible, that individual should contact their line manager to discuss the options available, including the use of alternative means of transport. If staff are unable to attend work, they will be required to take annual leave, flexi leave (for those grades to whom it applies) or leave without pay. Working from home will only be permitted where a prior arrangement has been put in place for that day with the line manager.

1.10 When the University is closed for the day, all staff for whom it would normally have been a working day, other than those who would have been absent (through sickness or maternity leave, for example) will be paid their normal rate for that day.

Annual leave / flexi leave which had been booked for that day cannot be reclaimed.

1.11 On occasions when a site is closed during the working day, those staff in work will be paid to the end of their normal working day.

1.12 Members of staff should not assume that early morning travel disruptions will prevail throughout the day, and should make continued efforts to attend for work, which may mean not relying upon their usual travel routes or modes of transport. This would not apply if the University activates the adverse weather policy and closes campus(es) for the full day.

1.13 Sympathetic consideration should be given to requests from staff to leave early because they have a long journey, or have to collect children from a school that has closed.

1.14 Due to the nature of the University, senior management will not be aware of all the activities, events or visits that are planned on campus for the period in question when making a decision to close/partially close. It is therefore the responsibility of the Faculty Deans/Directors of Corporate Departments and other managers to ensure that any information about the campus closure is communicated, as appropriate, to third parties to minimise the inconvenience caused to anyone concerned. This is particularly important for visitors, open days etc.

1.15 If the closure or partial closure of a campus coincides with the due date for assignments, dissertations etc. then it is the responsibility of each school to ensure that their students are informed via appropriate electronic channels of any revised procedures regarding the handing in of these documents.

1.16 Even if the University activates the severe weather policy and closes a campus completely, students will still be on site at Treforest (see 1.3 and 1.6 above) and there will be access to some buildings. Therefore it may be possible for members of staff to go to Treforest and work there if they are able to reach their normal campus.

1.16.1 Attendance is expected for certain key support staff (primarily in Estates and Facilities) whose presence is necessary to enable the safe operation of the site, or to prepare the site for access when the weather improves.

1.16.2 Other members of staff who can travel safely to and from the campus safely are also encouraged to do so, but are requested to report to security to advise them of their presence in the building.

**Part Two**

**Operational process**

2.1 This section outlines the process that should be followed to reach a decision on opening / shutting the University fully or partially in the event of:

* In-hours / normal working hours / day time snowfall
* Out of hours / overnight snowfall
* Out of hours / weekend snowfall

2.2 **In-hours / normal working hours / daytime snowfall**

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) will:
* Assess safety of all campuses through visual checks and / or discussions with local security personnel (on remote campuses) and / or Deans, Deputy Deans or Heads of Administration where necessary.
* Assess safety / viability of retaining core campus services functions for the remainder of the working day (i.e. crèche, catering, and accommodation).
* Then, will contact the Vice-Chancellor or their deputy to advise them of the situation.
* **Vice-Chancellor / Deputy V-C** advises decision to **Head of Estates**: this could be closure / part-closure / remain open, for each campus individually, or collectively as appropriate.
* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) relays decision to the **Duty Communications Manager** for further communication / action (see part three for details).

**2.3 Out of hours overnight snowfall**

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) will:
* Assess safety of all campuses through visual checks and / or discussions with local security personnel
* Assess safety / viability of retaining core campus services functions on campuses that include student residences (i.e. Treforest).
* Then, will contact the Vice-Chancellor or their deputy to advise them of the situation. BEFORE OR AS NEAR TO 7AM AS POSSIBLE
* **Head of Estates** relays VC’s decision and supporting information (e.g. safety advice; specific campus instructions; details of limited services; local traffic advice) to the **Duty Communications Manager**) for further action (see part three for details).

2.4 **Out of hours weekend snowfall**

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) will:
* Assess safety of all campuses through visual checks and / or discussions with local security personnel.
* Assess safety / viability of retaining core campus services functions on campuses that include student residences (i.e. Treforest).
* Then, contact the Vice-Chancellor or their deputy to advise them of the situation BEFORE OR AS NEAR TO 8AM AS POSSIBLE

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) relays VC’s decision and supporting information (e.g. safety advice; specific campus instructions; details of limited services; local traffic advice) to the **Duty Communications Manager** for further action (see part three).

2.5 **Re-opening of the University**

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) will:
* Assess safety of all campuses through visual checks and/or discussions with local security personnel.
* Assess safety / viability of reinstating the campuses to full or part operation
* Then, contact the Vice-Chancellor or their deputy to advise them of the situation: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR BEFORE 7AM ON THE DAY THE CAMPUS(ES) ARE DUE TO REOPEN (8AM ON A WEEKEND)

* **Head of Estates** (or their deputy) relays VC’s decision and supporting information (e.g. safety advice; specific campus instructions; details of limited services; local traffic advice) to the **Duty Communications Manager** for further action (see part three).

**Part Three**

**Communications process in the event of closure**

3.1 The **Duty Communications Manager** will agree the details of the communication and then cascade the message via WhatsApp and eMail according to the University’s contingency communications flow through the first line (main) communications channels, followed by the second line communications channels, with the appropriate channel managers (listed in 3.6).

3.2 **In the event of normal working hours / day time snowfall**

3.2.1 An all-staff email will be sent advising staff of the decision, plus any further advice and specific or local information or actions to take.

3.2.2 The communication will also be posted on the University’s main website [www.southwales.ac.uk](http://www.southwales.ac.uk) and main intranet site [thehub.southwales.ac.uk](https://thehub.southwales.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Section/Default.aspx?homepage=1&section=-1)

3.3 **In the event of out of hours / overnight / weekend snowfall**

3.3.1 The communication will be posted on the University’s main website [www.southwales.ac.uk](http://www.southwales.ac.uk) and main intranet site [thehub.southwales.ac.uk](https://thehub.southwales.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Section/Default.aspx?homepage=1&section=-1) along with any further advice, specific / local information or actions to take.

3.4 Where possible, communications will contain specific campus closure / part closure information and details of localised conditions.

3.5 The **Duty Communications Manager** will alert the following channel managers to the message with the action to cascade it through their appropriate channels (3.6.1) with social media linking to those main announcement pages.

3.5.1 Table of channel managers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Channel | Contacts | Additional message(s): |
| **Student channels**:  - Unilife  - Twitter | Kelly Symonds  As nominated | *Check Blackboard for specific updates on timetable changes / teaching / coursework deadlines* |
| **Student [academic] channels**:  - Blackboard | Martin Lynch | *Check Blackboard for specific updates on timetable changes / teaching / coursework deadlines* |
| **Staff channels:**  - @USWstaff  - Intranet (The Hub)  - All staff email | Emma Chapron  Neil Gibson | *Check news, Facebook & Twitter for updates on reopening.*  *Teaching staff – please advise students of timetable adjustments via Blackboard.* |
| **University main online**  - [www.southwales.ac.uk](http://www.southwales.ac.uk)  - @UniSouthWales  - USW Facebook | Stephen Cleary  As nominated | *Picture promo*  *Link to press centre announcement* |
| **Media** (news on main website)  - @USWcomms | Neil Gibson  As nominated |  |
| **IT Services**  - University switchboard message  - IS Support Desk | Tracey Balmer  Suzanne Smith | *Update automated messages with closure arrangements.* |

3.6 All channel messages should be copied from the original message distributed via the key communications channels (main website and The Hub). Messages should include any additional notes specific to the channel audience as outlined in table 3.6.1, above.

3.7 Channel owners should not wait to be contacted before posting the communication on their channels, once the original message has been posted via the key communications channels (main website and The Hub). The **Duty Communications Manager** will however make contact where practical to check that the update has been actioned.

3.8 Senior managers are responsible for ensuring information has been cascaded to members of their staff / department that are posted in remote campuses (e.g. Baglan / USW Sport Park) in the event of daytime snow. See contacts list for relevant contacts.

**Part Four: Key Contacts**

4.1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alias** | **Name** | **Contacts** | **Email** |
| JL | Julie Lydon  Vice-Chancellor | M 07919 058935  H 01453 824674 | [julie.lydon@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:julie.lydon@southwales.ac.uk) |
|  | Simon Chiffi  Head of Estates | M 07798 637 965 | [Simon.chiffi@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Simon.chiffi@southwales.ac.uk) |
| GL | Gareth Llewellyn  Head of Property Services | M 07734 133037 | [Gareth.llewellyn@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Gareth.llewellyn@southwales.ac.uk) |
| LG | Lloyd Griffiths  Senior Maintenance Manager | M 07867 668343 | [Lloyd.griffiths@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Lloyd.griffiths@southwales.ac.uk) |
| WJ | Wayne Jones  Health and Safety Adviser | M 07771 665275 | wayne.jones1@southwales.ac.uk |
| Duty CMgr | Duty Communications Manager  Neil Gibson  Alexandra Harden | M 07736 660538  M 07817 965486  M 07815 959157 | [Usw.communications@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Usw.communications@southwales.ac.uk) |
| KS | Kelly Symonds  Senior Digital Support Officer (Tues – Fri) | M 07748 085908 | kelly.symonds@southwales.ac.uk |
| CWJ | Cath Wright-Jones  Digital Support Officer | M 07704 515023  H 01443 449017 | [Cath.wright-jones@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Cath.wright-jones@southwales.ac.uk) |
| AM | Amy Mulcahy  Digital Support Officer | M 07960 533449 | Amy.mulcahy@southwales.ac.uk |
| SC | Stephen Cleary  Digital Marketing Manager | M 07863 331845 | [Stephen.cleary@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:Stephen.cleary@southwales.ac.uk) |
| ML | Martin Lynch  Learning Systems Manager | M 07542 142767 | martin.lynch@southwales.ac.uk |
| TB | Tracey Balmer  Business Support Manager, IT Services | M 07940 174449 | tracey.balmer@southwales.ac.uk |
| SS | Suzanne Smith  Customer Support Manager, IT Services | M 07990 442395 | susanne.smith@southwales.ac.uk |
| SV | Steve Savage  Sports & Business Development Manager | M 07990 743 999 | [steve.savage@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:steve.savage@southwales.ac.uk) |

**Part Five: Key contact responsibilities**

5.1 Each of the members of staff included in the key contacts list (4.1) should keep a copy of this plan at home in case of out of hours incidents.

5.2 Members are responsible for ensuring their contact phone numbers are up to date.

5.3 Individuals should ensure that they are contactable from 7am in the event that severe snow is forecast overnight. 8am in the event of weekend snowfall.

5.4 Channel owners (3.6.1) will need internet **access at home in order to update communications channels remotely. In the event this is not possible, an alternative contact should be provided.**

5.5 Members should inform the **Duty Communications Manager** of any changes to their contact details/responsibilities/deputies.

5.6 Members should inform the Head of Corporate Communications or his deputy if they are unavailable to fulfil their duties as laid out in this plan during any periods when snow is forecast to fall.

[press@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:press@southwales.ac.uk)

5.7 The **Duty Communications Manager** will, where possible, give members of this group advanced warning vis WhatsApp in the event that there is a likelihood that the plan will be invoked.

**Part Six: draft closure / reopening messages**

6.1 CLOSURE: **In-hours /normal working hours / day time snowfall**

*The University will close today [date] at [time] due to the inclement weather.*

*All campus buildings will remain open for two hours from the issue of this message to allow staff time to leave. After this time security staff will begin the process of securing the campus buildings - please ensure you leave promptly after this time. All University campus gates will be opened where possible to allow traffic to leave the sites. Staff are requested to take care when leaving the premises to avoid accident or injury.*

*For information on how closure affects your contracted hours and the University’s policy on absence as a result of inclement weather, please refer to the Severe Weather Policy and Operational Plan or contact HR during opening hours.*

*Check TheHub for staff and Unilife for students, the press centre (*[*http://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/*](http://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/)*) and the University’s Facebook and Twitter accounts for further updates. A message will be posted by 7.20am tomorrow to advise staff of tomorrow’s opening status.*

*Follow the University on Facebook and Twitter:* [*https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfSouthWales*](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfSouthWales) *and*

[*https://twitter.com/unisouthwales*](https://twitter.com/unisouthwales) *.*

More help and advice: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/advice/snow.html>

6.2 CLOSURE: **Out of hours / overnight snowfall**

*The University is closed all day/ part of the day today, [day & date] due to the bad weather.*

*Check TheHub for staff and Unilife for students, the press centre (*[*http://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/*](http://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/)*) and the University’s Facebook and Twitter accounts for further updates. A message will be posted by 7.20am tomorrow to advise staff of tomorrow’s opening status.*

*For information on how closure affects your contracted hours and the University’s policy on absence as a result of inclement weather, please refer to the Severe Weather Policy and Operational Plan or contact HR during opening hours.*

*Follow the University on Facebook and Twitter:* [*https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfSouthWales*](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfSouthWales) *and*

[*https://twitter.com/unisouthwales*](https://twitter.com/unisouthwales)*.*

More help and advice: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/advice/snow.html>

**6.3 REOPENING:**

*The University is fully open / partly open today, [day & date] / following the closure due to inclement weather.*

And the following as relevant:

* Part / full opening details
* Campuses-specific details
* Specific roads/paths/areas that are not in use / dangerous spots to avoid
* Message to teaching staff as follows:

*All timetabled teaching activity is expected to take place today as normal. However if you are unable to reach the University today due to localised bad weather or travel problems, you must make every effort to inform your students via Blackboard at the earliest possible time, to ensure students are not inconvenienced.*

* A safety note as follows: e.g:

*Although the campus has been deemed safe to open, some paths and roads may still be slippery. You must take care when making your way into and around campus and wear sensible footwear.*

* Inclement weather policy notice:

*For contractual information relating to absence as a result of inclement weather, please refer to the Severe Weather Policy and Operational Plan or contact HR during opening hours.*

* Message to students as follows:

*All timetabled teaching activity is expected to take place today as normal. However, you are urged to check Blackboard for specific updates on your course timetable before you leave home.*

* Any other specific advice to students + the following caveat:

*While the University is striving to provide normal service to our students today, we cannot guarantee that some disruption to normal services and timetables will not be experienced, as a result of the continuing travel problems caused by the bad weather.*

*More help and advice:* [*http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/advice/snow.html*](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/advice/snow.html)