Annex A: Considerations for extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather

Please consider the following questions to complete your risk assessment, using the generic risk assessment and the associated guidance.

Extreme bad weather

Considerations for opening a school or setting

First consideration	Other consideration(s)
Is the building accessible?	What are the forecasted long-term weather conditions? Are there any Met Office warnings? www.metoffice.gov.uk
Are there any areas within the school or setting locality especially impassable or dangerous in times of extreme bad weather?	Consideration should be given to getting to and from the school or setting. In the case of one-way traffic systems, the route into the school or setting may be a lesser gradient than the route away. There may be locations on the journey where snow and ice is known to cause early closure of roads or railways. Consider finding alternative routes prior to extreme bad weather to help those travelling to decide their route when required.
Are vehicle routes into the grounds of the school or setting passable?	Could access be improved before staff, buses, parents or carers, attend the site?

	Is parking possible outside the school or setting grounds until action has been taken to make the area passable? If a main pedestrian route, inside the school or setting grounds, is through a vehicle parking area then vehicles should be excluded. There may be a need for signage to this effect.
Are pedestrian routes on the grounds of the school or setting passable?	Can these routes be cleared using salt or grit for example? If required, can movement to various parts of the school or setting be limited without disruption, ensuring efforts can focus on keeping general access routes safe? Can priority be given to ensuring slopes, steps or ramps are safe, or can these areas be restricted from use? The use of outside metal staircases should also be avoided unless appropriately treated. If open, vehicle parking areas should have a passable pedestrian route to access the school or setting.
Can the headteacher gain enough staff to operate safely?	The most important consideration is whether a school or setting can operate safely, not whether it can follow a full and normal curriculum. For all schools and settings, what would be the threshold of staff numbers in respect to expected children and young people? Childcare settings will need to adhere ratios as set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Childcare for Children up to the age of 12 years'. For childcare settings and primary schools, learners would likely be local, with a greater expectancy of attendance. Schools in rural areas or

	secondary schools may have learners from a wider area and may be more dependent on dedicated buses or public transport. Therefore, numbers may be less and supervision easier.
Is the school or setting appropriately heated?	Is there enough fuel or power for the day? Have there been previous failures of the heating system in autumn or winter months and is remedial action readily available?
Are water systems working appropriately?	Are there known faults in times of varying weather? Are there written records ensuring appropriate checks are made?

Considerations for keeping a school or setting open

First consideration	Other consideration(s)
Can the level of heating be maintained throughout the day or week?	If required, could the low overnight temperature be raised without having a negative effect on the effectiveness of the system?
Can people's movement be minimized between buildings if access and exit made externally?	In schools, if learner numbers are low, can classes be grouped together? Can these areas be cleared and maintained to limit the restriction? In childcare settings, any change to session structure would need to adhere to requirements in the 'National Minimum Standards for Childcare for Children up to the age of 12 years' regarding group size and room use.

During periods of snow or ice restriction of outside play would limit the snow or ice from becoming compacted, and therefore more dangerous.	If conditions are not dangerous outside play may be possible. However, more supervision may be needed. Could play or breaks be staggered to ensure appropriate levels of supervision? If any snow or ice is present prohibit running.
Can the school or setting grounds be maintained to make it safe to open the following day?	Pedestrian walkways should be a priority, over vehicle parking, but in the long term parking areas inside the school or setting grounds should be treated, or cleared of snow. People who have parked in the school or setting grounds should be aware of the priority and told to take care in this area. Signs could be placed to remind these individuals. Maintenance should be a priority where pedestrian walkways also coincide with vehicle areas. Alternatively, restrictions could be made on pedestrians, or cars stopped from entering that area.
Monitor the weather situation locally and through the media (for example The Met Office).	Local authorities may be able to provide information regarding road clearance, providing assurance of home journeys, or return journeys the following day.
Maintain ongoing communication with dedicated transport companies.	It may be necessary for dedicated buses to arrive earlier than the scheduled time in order to ensure the safe and timely travel of learners home.

Are maintenance materials and personnel available to ensure the school or setting can eliminate, reduce or isolate risk throughout the day?	Can similar provision be assured for the following day(s)? Salt or grit spread on walkways or other areas at the end of the day could limit icing. This could also prevent a further snowfall from taking a foothold and re-icing. Slush or water from thawed snow or ice should be cleared as much as possible to prevent re-icing. Iced slush could be more dangerous than the initial fall as surfaces may be uneven and more slippery.

Preventative considerations

First consideration	Other consideration(s)
Is there a written policy for extreme bad weather and school or setting closure?	Is the policy shared with staff, parents and carers?
The headteacher or manager will have a risk assessment in place which considers the foreseeable risks of extreme bad weather.	Use the generic risk assessment at Annex B or use Annex B as a guide for the headteacher or manager to create their own general risk assessment. Which locations tend to be the most affected? What is the experience from previous years? How many children and young people rely on transport provided by the school or setting?

Is there a system for communicating with caretakers, maintenance staff, practitioners, teachers, and other supervisory staff to see how they will travel to and from the school or setting at the time of extreme bad weather?	The headteacher or manager should be aware of the location of their staff and be able to communicate with them to discuss attendance.
Are there areas of the school or setting that would retain water, snow, or ice more than others?	If remedial action cannot be taken to avoid retention of water, snow or ice, can these areas be avoided without impacting on the opening of the school or setting?
Are stocks of salt or grit adequate for the time of year and foreseeable weather?	How easy is it to reorder salt or grit? Are there allocation limits and can any paperwork for re-ordering be prepared in advance? Are alternative suppliers of salt or grit available nearby?
Access points for buildings should have facilities to allow people to wipe off water, snow or ice from their shoes, boots, etc..	Are there adequate mats and mops? Are there clear and understood arrangements for keeping access points in good order?

Extreme hot weather

General considerations

First consideration	Other consideration(s)
Is there a written policy for extreme hot weather?	Is the policy shared with staff, parents and carers?

The headteacher or manager should have a risk assessment in place which considers the foreseeable risks of extreme hot weather.	Use the generic risk assessment at Annex B or use Annex B as a guide for the headteacher or manager to create their own general risk assessment. What is the experience from previous years?
Are there areas of the school or setting that would become warmer than others?	If action cannot be taken to ensure these areas are cooled, can these areas be avoided without impacting on children and staff?