



University Technical College Warrington (UTCW)

Closure Policy

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1. Introduction

It may be necessary to close UTCW for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather e.g. snow, flooding or storms
- Disruption to transport, for example through petrol or diesel shortages
- Accommodation and utility problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage. External factors outside of UTC control e.g. instruction from public authorities and police.

UTCW will, however, endeavour to remain open wherever possible.

2. Guiding principles

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Provide a learning environment that is safe during adverse conditions and to take appropriate actions when it is deemed unsafe.
- Ensure that the decision to close UTCW is understood by and communicated to students, staff, parents/carers and Trustees.
- Keep to a minimum the amount of time UTCW is closed during adverse conditions.

3. Closure before the start of the UTC day

The decision to close UTCW will normally rest with the Principal or in their absence the Vice Principal. The decision should be made as early as possible and on the basis of information received from:

- The Media about the weather, condition of the roads and paths and public transport;
- The local bus provider;
- On the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations;
- Through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office and utility providers;
- Factors involved in reaching the decision to close UTCW are likely to be:
 - Access to the UTC, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc.);
 - Breakdown of UTC essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc.);
 - Specific advice received from the Local Authority, Police etc.;

The Principal will advise staff through the emergency communication tree or other communication media such as Whatsapp or email.

Parents/carers will be advised via Parent Mail.

Parents/carers and students are asked to check the UTCW website homepage at www.utcwarrington.org where further information specific to UTCW will be made available. Announcement may also be made via other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as appropriate. They can also monitor the Local Authority's webpage which publishes details of closures.

4. In the Event of Extreme Weather

UTC Warrington is committed to staying open in all circumstances, it is very unlikely that we will ever have to close and parents and students should assume that UTCW will remain open unless they hear otherwise. However, in the event of severe weather conditions (such as heavy snow), UTCW considers the safety and wellbeing of its students and staff with the utmost importance and the decision to close the college will be taken seriously. UTCW will also take account of local and national weather forecasts and may base its decision to close (or remain closed during a prolonged snowy spell) on these.

If there is heavy snowfall overnight the Principal will decide whether it is safe to open the college. We will do everything possible to make our decision by 7.00am. All students should assume that the college is open as normal in all circumstances, but can check this website or call the main college number: 01925 737067, if they are in any doubt. Any planned prolonged closures will be decided as early as possible and be communicated in the same way.

If there is heavy snowfall during the college day, we will aim to keep students in college until the end of the normal day or until they are picked up. However, if transport disruption requires staff and students to leave early, a decision will be made as soon as possible and parents will be informed via the school website and e-mail. Students who live in vulnerable geographical areas will be invited to go home at the most timely and appropriate opportunity.

UTCW will not re-open until the site has clear pathways into the building and that major routes to the building can be safely negotiated by students.

5. Staff Attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for some staff to get to and from work, the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work unless advised to the contrary by the Principal. Those staff with a UTCW laptop are able to their home drives and should be able to work on planning or other directed tasks. Other staff can use the time to complete planning or directed tasks.

6. Exams

Any students who are unable to attend an exam session due to adverse weather conditions must contact UTCW at the earliest opportunity to inform them of the absence. Where there is an external exam which cannot be retaken the Exams Officer will inform the exam board and apply for special consideration which is up to the discretion of the exam board.

7. Closure during the UTC school day

The decision to close UTCW will normally rest with the Principal or in their absence the Vice Principal. The decision shall be made on the basis of information received from:

- The Media about the weather, condition of the roads and paths and public transport;
- The local bus provider;
- On the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations;

- Through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office;
- Information received from external authorities such as the LA or police
- Factors involved in reaching the decision to close UTCW are likely to be:
 - Access to the UTC, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc.);
 - Breakdown of UTC essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc.);
 - Specific advice received from the Local Authority, Police etc.;

The Principal will advise staff on-site and recall staff who are off-site and initiate the closure procedure see appendix 1.

Parents/carers will be advised via Parent Mail or text if this is available, with responses being monitored.

Parents/carers and students are asked to check the UTC website homepage on www.utcwarrington.org where further information specific to the UTC will be made available. Announcement may also be made via other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as appropriate. They can also monitor the Local Authority's webpage www.warrington.gov.uk which publishes details of closures.

8. In the event of a closure

If UTCW is closed, it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the following events happen:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair of Trustees
- The UTCW Website is updated
- The communication tree is activated
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible

Appendix 1 – Closure Procedure

