

**Title: Emergency Situations – HR Guidance      Number: E4      Date: Nov '12**

## **Procedure for staff experiencing difficulty in travelling to work-**

### **Office/School closure and early finish for employees**

Generally the decision to send pupils home will be decided by each Headteacher in consultation with Head of Service on the basis that such decisions must not endanger the safety of pupils. Headteachers will be guided by information from the Chief Executive, Director of Education, Environment & Infrastructure and Emergency Planning. Teachers who can be expected to reach home safely will continue to work as usefully as possible for the rest of the normal working day.

### **Expectations of staff**

- Staff will be contacted outlining 'resilient schools' has been evoked across Scottish Borders through a 'call tree' (business continuity).
- Staff living within 1.5 miles of a school should report to their nearest school. (Primary staff to primary school, secondary staff to secondary school).
- The number of staff available will determine the number of classes/year groups able to attend the school. This has already been established however the situation could be affected by a number of factors on the day.
- Staff living out with 1.5 miles of a school – should remain at home, work directed by line manager.
- Staff living out with Scottish Borders Council – should remain at home, work directed by line manager.
- Staff living within the 1.5 mile radius who have for example medical reasons/geographical reasons and cannot access school (risk assessment carried out) should have discussed at the beginning of term with their line manager. Work should be completed as directed by line manager.

### **Reporting for work**

Where the workplace is open employees should make every effort to report for work at the recognised start time, but if they are late or cannot reach work they must telephone as soon as possible to explain the situation. In discussion with the Line Manager, if an employee is unable to reach their normal place of work wherever possible they should work from home or from another site which they are able to attend.

Where a school is closed to pupils, teachers are required to contact their headteacher/school management team and a decision will be made as to whether the teacher will do collegiate work, personal work, or work from home.

Teachers who are unable to reach their normal place of work should try to contact or report to the nearest primary school if they are primary teachers, and the nearest secondary if they are secondary teachers. This is required to provide cover in local schools where teachers who are based in the school may not be able to attend because of the conditions.

In poor weather conditions where offices/schools are open it is the employee's responsibility to make the decision as to whether or not it is safe for them to make the journey to work. Where routes to work are open but an employee decides not to make the journey to work, for example because they are worried about the driving conditions, they must take annual leave or unpaid leave.

Where employees can make arrangements to come to work, for example if their vehicle is stuck but they could arrange a lift with someone else, they should do so. If an employee decides not to make such arrangements they must take annual leave or unpaid leave.

If employees are aware in advance of adverse weather they should wherever possible make arrangements to take work home (clearly this will not be possible for significant groups of employees). If the working from home requires the use of a computer, employees should discuss potential arrangements with their line manager. This could include taking a laptop home or using their home computer. Should such work from home require a link to the Council, for example for access to e-mails, consideration should be given to making arrangements for such access in accordance with the Home Working scheme. This would have to be arranged in advance to allow IT the necessary time to put arrangements in place.

### **First day when employees have difficulty in travelling to their normal base**

Where an employee arrives late or leaves early, or is unable to attend work for a half or full day and the Director/Head of Service is satisfied with the employee's explanation, the employee should be granted paid leave for the balance of hours to take them to a normal working day.

### **Subsequent days**

If the employee is still unable to report for work on subsequent days it is at the discretion of the Director/Head of Service to grant either annual leave, unpaid leave or in exceptional circumstances paid leave.

### **Scheme of payment during an emergency**

## **GENERAL**

In a major emergency Scottish Borders Council has a responsibility to respond both in support of the Emergency Services and in co-ordinating the longer term measures to alleviate hardship and repair damage. The Council also has a duty to maintain normal services. A major emergency is defined as:

Circumstances involving a serious disruption of life arising with little or no warning, causing or threatening death or injury to numbers of people, or extensive damage to property, or contamination of the environment, on a scale which is in excess of the capacity of the public services operating under normal conditions and requiring the special mobilisation, organisation and co-ordination of those services.

In a major emergency staff are likely to be involved in manning the emergency centre and on other emergency duties outwith normal working hours, including night and weekend working. In such circumstances, the following scheme of payment would be implemented, where appropriate, and when authorised by the Chief Executive.

## **SCHEME OF PAYMENT**

The Chief Executive will determine the start and end of any designated major emergency period for payment purposes. During any such designated period the arrangements detailed below will apply. Any variation of these arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Chief Executive during unforeseen or extreme circumstances.

### **AII EMPLOYEES**

All employees will be paid at their normal rate of pay regardless of the emergency duties undertaken.

Where employees are required to be on duty outwith these hours they will be paid enhanced overtime rates and allowances for shift, night and weekend working in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Schemes of Salaries / Wages and Conditions of Service.

During an emergency situation if an employee refuses alternative working accommodation or homeworking they will only be paid for hours worked.

Where individuals are required to undertake very exceptional responsibilities, greatly in excess of their routine duties, payment of an honorarium may be approved by the Chief Executive after the major emergency period has ended.

### **Travel allowances during an emergency**

## General Conditions

Employees whose place of employment is changed by circumstances beyond their control (either when transferred at reorganisation to Scottish Borders Council or when transferred from one location to another within the service of Scottish Borders Council, not as a result of the individual submitting an application for a post) and due to the change incur additional expenses travelling to work, will be entitled to claim excess travelling expenses for up to 1 year in accordance with the following conditions:

- Excess expenses shall be based on one of the following, whichever is relevant to the employee's circumstances:
  - (a) Bus fares
  - (b) A locally approved transport rate of 45 pence per mile in respect of additional mileage actually involved in change of base
  - (c) A locally approved passenger rate of 6.2 pence per mile in respect of additional mileage actually involved in the change of base where transport is provided by a fellow employee
- Additional mileage will be based on the difference between home and the new base and home and the old base.
- Disturbance allowance can be claimed only for journeys actually undertaken between home and the new base.
- Payment of disturbance allowance applies only where the allowance payable for travelling both ways from home to the new place of work and from home to the old place is greater than £2.75 per week.
- If an employee chooses to move house within the first year of their change of base, the allowances will be reviewed and, depending on the circumstances, will remain the same, be reduced or cease.

Claims should be submitted to the Schools Team on a yellow form headed "Disturbance for Transferred Officers and Taxable Travelling Expenses" Ref. PAY 05 either weekly with your time sheet or monthly for the period ending on 24th of the month.

Employees should indicate in the appropriate column whether they undertook the journey as a passenger or as a driver. The section concerning "Make of Car" etc. need only be completed by drivers.

### Travel from home to location other than new base

Where the first journey from home in the morning is to a location other than your new base normal business mileage/expenses may be claimed in accordance with normal procedures (see below), with your old base being used as the basis for any calculation purposes. Similarly, normal business mileage/expenses may be claimed where your last journey home at night is from a location other than your new base.

Once the right to claim disturbance allowance ceases the new base will become your designated base and will therefore be used for all calculation purposes.

### **Staff wellbeing and support during an emergency**

Scottish Borders Council values the wellbeing of all staff and recognises that additional support may be needed during an emergency and for sometime after the event.

All staff have access to the Employee Helpline which operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week tel 0870 164 8276. The helpline offers free confidential advice on issues such as stress, relationships and financial worries.

In addition the Council has access to the CAPITA Occupational Health Service which can provide health advice over the telephone to line managers as well as carrying out complete referrals. Qualified counsellors are available to assist staff in coping with an emergency situation.