**Weather Warnings - Advice on Dealing with High Winds**

**Weather Warnings and Impacts resulting from wind**

As you might be aware, there has been two storms Arwen and Barra that brought gale force wind. These wind speeds were 85mph at their fastest and strongest, which prompted Yellow and Amber Weather Warnings.

There are more of these storms to come and with the assistance from the Met Office, the Emergency Planning in Slough Borough Council would mitigate the impact by initiating our warning and informing protocol.

**Weather warning impacts and what they mean**

The Met Office issues weather warnings, when severe weather has the potential to bring impacts to the UK.  These warnings are based on a combination of the level of impacts the weather may cause and the likelihood of those impacts occurring. Yellow and Amber warnings represent a range of impact levels and likelihoods. This means it is important to read each warning to know what level of impact you can expect for your chosen warning area – and how likely those impacts are to occur.

**Yellow Warning**: Yellow warnings can be issued for a range of weather situations. Many are issued when it is likely that the weather will cause some low level impacts, including some disruption to travel in a few places.

The **Met Office** normally issues a yellow weather warning for wind, with the strong gusts predicted to cause travel disruptions, or risk of structures like external decorations, Christmas decorations, hoardings, marquees and gazebos, being blown away by gusts of up to 40-50mph if they are not secured properly. Causing damage or injuries to the Pupils / Students or school property.

**Amber Warning:** An amber warning is the **next level down from a red warning**, so the situation is not quite as severe. Amber means it is quite likely that bad weather will affect people, possibly including school closures, travel delays, lack of staff, road and rail closures and power cuts.

The Met Office will normally give an amber alert when there is a medium likelihood that members of the public will have to be prepared to change travel plans in order to keep themselves safe. How do you find out when amber weather warnings are in place?

**Red Warning:** Dangerous weather is expected and, if you haven’t already done so, you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the severe weather. It is very likely that there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. You should avoid travelling, where possible, and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

**Impacts resulting from wind**

Wind storms tend to last for several hours in any one location although the impacts may continue for longer.  However, if a major wind storm is followed by subsequent windy spells, recovery from the impacts of the original storm can be hampered and the impacts can become prolonged.

Strong winds and storms often result in tree damage and trees being brought down. Where trees fall is critical to the type and severity of the impact caused. A single tree falling across a road, railway or falling onto property can have a very different level of impact - compared to several trees falling in remote countryside. Trees can often be the catalyst for the impacts listed below, such as loss of power when a tree falls onto power lines or delayed travel times when trees block road or rail routes.

An indication of the types of impacts that could occur for each of weather types we warn for are shown in the tables below. They also provide a guide to impacts for what is included at 'low', 'medium', and 'high' levels of impact. The tables provide some of the types of impact that can be expected as a direct result of the forecast weather conditions.

The impacts listed in the columns are illustrative of the range of impacts that may be experienced for this warning level, but not all of the impacts listed will necessarily occur with any particular severe weather event.

See the table below.

**Some definitions used in warning alerts and impact tables:**

* **Localised:** there will be a few instances of the impact across the warning area
* **Widespread:** impacts are expected to be experienced across much of the warning area
* **Prolonged:** impacts could persist for several days
* **Short-lived or short-term:** impacts could last for a few hours
* **Utilities and services:** could include electricity, phone, mobile phone, internet services, water and gas supplies

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very Low | Low | Medium | High |
| Loose debris blown around.  A few transport routes affected by difficult driving conditions.  Instances of spray and large waves affecting coastal routes, sea fronts and coastal communities. | Some transport routes and travel services affected.  Some journeys require longer travel times.  Some disruption to road, rail, air and ferry transport.  Difficult driving conditions for high-sided vehicles on prone routes, such as cross winds on exposed or high level roads.  A few power interruptions. | Injuries and danger to life from flying debris.  Some structural damage, such as slates dislodged from roofs.  Transport routes and travel services affected.  Longer journey times expected.  Disruption to road, rail, air and/or ferry transport.  Closure of some susceptible and key routes (e.g. some vulnerable bridges).  Interruptions to power and/or other utilities and services.  school closures, staff absence | Widespread danger to life from flying debris.  Widespread structural damage e.g. roofs blown off, mobile homes overturned, power lines brought down.  Transport routes and travel services affected for a prolonged period.  Long travel delays.  Closure of main bridges, road and rail networks in many areas, and significant disruption to air and ferry transport.  Widespread and prolonged disruption to power, and/or other utilities and services.  school closures, staff absence |

When a **Yellow Warning** is received, the situation should be monitored and with consistent communications.

Check loose fitting around the school and ensure they are secured.

Ensure windows are properly closed to avoid the windows smashing on impact.

Clear heavy debris around the school yard

Secure playground equipment like swings etc.

Park vehicles away from trees, buildings, or fences that could fall and damage the vehicle.

Keep monitoring the situation.

When an **Amber Warning** is received the situation should be monitored and begin to prepare to initiate your response plans and response staff.

Check loose fitting around the school and ensure they are secured.

Ensure windows are properly closed to avoid the windows smashing on impact.

Clear heavy debris around the school yard

Secure playground equipment like swings etc.

Park vehicles away from trees, buildings, or fences that could fall and damage the vehicle.

Plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of day-to-day activities.

Keep monitoring the situation.

When a **Red warning** is received action needs to be taken to mitigate the impact of the high winds.

If school is in session then all must remain inside

If school is not in session the alternative forms of teaching must be utilised, so as to prevent unnecessary travelling and keeping Student / Pupils safe at home.

Follow advice given by Emergency Services or Local Authority

Follow steps above in the Amber Warning.