

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Mission Statement

St. Mary's College is a Roman Catholic College operating under the trusteeship of the Marist Fathers.

We base our philosophy on the true Christian values proclaimed in the gospel and seek to provide a challenging, high quality education whereby all members of the College community can grow as balanced individuals, morally, intellectually and spiritually.

Sub Mariae Nomine

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Every attempt is made to ensure continuity of education, but there may be extreme conditions when it is not possible to open the College for safety reasons. Alternatively, there may be circumstances where deteriorating weather conditions enforce a decision to close the College early. In such circumstances the following procedures will be followed.

2 Forecasts of Extreme Weather

- 2.1 In the event of forecasts of extreme weather conditions, such as heavy snow, which may lead to road closures and transport disruption, staff and students will be put onto "weather alert" footing. This will involve informing them of the steps that will be taken in the event of a closure being unavoidable.
- 2.2 In such circumstances, staff and students will be made aware of the methods of communication that will be used to confirm a closure before the start of a College day, and staff will be asked to prepare work for students to undertake should the College be closed. This may be given to them, or uploaded onto the Moodle system.

3 Closure before the start of College day

- 3.1 A decision to close St Mary's will, where possible, be made before 6.45 a.m. Such a decision will be based on the most up-to-date information available on local road and weather conditions, transport and traffic delays and weather forecasts for the immediate future.
- 3.2 If the College is to be closed, local radio stations will be informed and will broadcast information about the closure. Such a message to the radio stations requires an authentication code which is changed annually.
- 3.3 Radio stations broadcasting information about the closure of the College will be:

Station	Frequency
BBC Radio Lancashire	95.5FM, 103.9 FM, 104.5 FM
Rock FM	97.4 FM
Century FM	105.4 FM
The Bee	107.0 FM
2BR	99.8 FM

- 3.4 Such early notice should be sufficient for College transport to be cancelled for the day of the closure. A direct telephone call will be made as soon as possible after the office opening time of 7.45 a.m. to confirm the closure.
- 3.5 One of the first colleagues to be informed of the closure will be the Network Manager, who will ensure that information is put immediately onto the Moodle front page, which does not need a log-in password for access.
- 3.6 In addition SMT will contact the Kitchen Manager, in order to allow deliveries to be postponed.
- 3.7 Informing the BBC local radio ensures that the College will be listed on the BBC website - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/lancashire/news> - and this can be listed as another source of information.
- 3.8 Parents subscribing to the absence text messaging service will receive a text message informing them that the College will not be open.
- 3.9 If it is possible for the answering service to have a message recorded about the closure this will be undertaken. If it is not possible for relevant staff to get to College to administer this, the out-of-hours "College closed" message will remain as the default setting.
- 3.10 Staff will be informed according to a "communications tree" with line managers taking responsibility for letting colleagues in their departments know about the closure.

4 Closure during the College day

- 4.1 A decision about an early closure may have to be made by the Senior Management Team. Such a decision will be based on discussion with bus companies and consultation of local traffic and weather reports.
- 4.2 Students and staff will be notified of the closure time. Students using College transport will be notified of any possible changes to their route and advised to depart on the correct bus.
- 4.3 Students who are collected from College or who have special travel arrangements will be asked to contact home to discuss emergency arrangements.

- 4.4 St Mary's College will remain open and staffed until the last students are able to leave the site.

5 St Mary's College Nursery

- 5.1 Depending on local conditions, it may not be necessary to close the Nursery, even if disruption to transport and traffic necessitates the closure of the main College. Parents and children accessing the Nursery tend to live more locally, as do the staff, and it may be possible to function safely and with required staff:child ratios.
- 5.2 In the event of poor forecasts, this situation will be discussed in advance with the Nursery Manager, and, in the event of extreme weather occurring, a judgement will be made early on the day in question, through discussion between the Principal and the Nursery Manager.

6 St Mary's Nursery at Wensley Fold

- 6.1 The Nursery in the Children's Centre at Wensley Fold will be subject to a separate adverse weather policy.

7 Adult Evening Classes

- 7.1 In the event of an emergency closure, adult degree and Skills for Life classes will be suspended, and students will be contacted to pre-empt their making unnecessary journeys. The Degree Office Manager will contact Liverpool Hope University to prevent staff travelling.
- 7.2 Learners will be advised of the information sources above.

8 Disruption during examination season

- 8.1 Should the closure be necessary when students are sitting, or due to sit examinations, every step possible will be taken to safeguard the integrity of the examination.
- 8.2 Contact will be made with the relevant examination boards to negotiate an amended start or finish time as appropriate.
- 8.3 In the event of imminent extreme weather conditions, which may prevent Examinations Office colleagues attending College, access to examination papers will be safeguarded by identifying a locally-based colleague as emergency key-holder of the examination store.
- 8.4 Radio and Moodle messages will stress that, where safe and practicable, students sitting examination papers should make every attempt to get into College, and negotiations with transport companies will stress the importance of such students having every opportunity to reach St Mary's.

8.5 Staff local to the College will be asked take responsibility for the administration of the examinations.

8.6 After the end of the examination session, the procedure would be as for an early closure.

9 Reopening after an emergency closure

9.1 A decision to re-open St Mary's after a forced emergency closure will be made, where possible, before 6.45 a.m. Such a decision will be based on the most up-to-date information available on local weather and road conditions, transport and traffic delays and weather forecasts for the immediate future.

9.2 Radio stations will not announce re-openings; therefore, staff and students should understand that unless the College is listed as being closed it is likely to be open as normal.

9.3 One of the first colleagues to be informed of the re-opening will be the Network Manager, who will ensure that information is put immediately onto the Moodle front page.

9.4 Parents subscribing to the absence text messaging service will receive a text message informing them that the College will be open.

9.5 A direct telephone call will be made as soon after the transport office opening time of 7.45 a.m. to confirm the reinstatement of College transport.

9.6 As soon as a member of the Reception Team arrives in College, the night service message will be altered, so that anyone ringing in will know the College is open.