



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

DRAFT SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

**Date approved by Governors:
Review Date: September 2021**

School Mission Statement

At Saint Augustine's we believe that every person is made and loved by God. This is why we respect one another. Within our school community our young people will learn to act justly, love tenderly and recognise God in their lives.

Our school helps families to educate their children in accordance with the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church in an environment which inspires, encourages and supports the development of our pupils through nurturing their gifts and talents.

Our school community will keep alive the memory of Jesus through the Eucharist and through the practice of our Faith. We want everyone at Saint Augustine's to experience the joy of the Gospel in their journey through school and beyond.

Together we will work to make a difference in our community and in the wider world. We follow the example of Saint Augustine by stepping out in faith and celebrating our reasons for living and hoping.

When it Snows or Floods...

On rare occasions, the weather can be so severe that getting to and from school becomes hazardous. A school like ours, which most pupils travel to on buses, sometimes over long distances, is particularly vulnerable. This is especially so if the weather worsens in the afternoon. Really bad weather is disruptive and can cause anxiety and stress. Understandably, many parents ring the school if there is an increasing risk of flooding or if snow starts falling heavily during the day. It can be frustrating trying to get through when all our outside lines are engaged by other parents calling for the same reason! Jammed lines and answering queries can in turn delay office staff who are trying to get through to the bus companies to arrange for early collection of pupils. We have a texting service to inform parents of closures, which should reduce the need to telephone school.

We will ensure that our website www.sarchs.com is updated throughout the day regarding any developments which might affect transport arrangements. To guarantee that you have the latest information, please refresh your browser. Any decision to close the school will also be communicated to parents via our text messaging service so it is vital that your contact details are up to date. You can use Insight to update. In extreme circumstances, when very bad weather is predicted or has broken out, the school will allow pupils to call their parents via a mobile phone if they have one. Such calls must have prior approval of a teacher and be made in a supervised environment.

Decisions about closing the school or sending pupils home early are always difficult to make. We check weather reports, get advice from the bus companies and try to assess what is happening elsewhere in the area. Sometimes buses are not available. Operators have to decide whether running vehicles on particular routes in snow and ice is too high a risk. Drivers are rarely available at times other than scheduled school runs. That is why schools often take their lead from the bus companies when deciding what to do.

Severe Overnight Weather

Once we have made the decision (either the previous evening or very early on the same day) not to open the school, we will post this on our website and social media channels. Please always refer to our website in the first instance. Remember that you might need to refresh the page. We also contact BBC Radio Lancashire who announce school closures as they get them. BBC Radio Lancashire lists school closures on its website.

BBC Radio Lancashire: 95.5 FM / 855 MW / 1557 MW

Twitter: [@sarchsofficial](https://twitter.com/sarchsofficial)

Facebook: facebook.com/sarchsofficial

If the weather deteriorates during the day

- The school will be closed early only in extreme cases.
- The closure may be staggered. Pupils from Dunsop Bridge or Sabden, for example, may go first, depending on road conditions.
- The decision to close the school will be made by the Headteacher and other key staff.
- Any decision to close the school early will be passed on to staff and pupils as soon as we have made arrangements. Parents will be informed via the school website and by text message where we have a contact number.
- We will tell pupils if we know of any changes to normal routes for school buses so that they can decide the best way to get home.

- Pupils being collected from school or who wish to make other arrangements will be allowed to phone home for advice on what to do.
- Pupils who live nearby will be allowed to walk home, preferably in family groups or in the company of other pupils who live near to each other.
- School will be kept open with staff on hand until the last pupil has left.
- It is not normally possible for pupils to be given lifts by staff.

How Parents Can Help

- Check the school website and listen to BBC Lancashire for early morning information.
- Plan ahead with your child what to do in a bad weather emergency.
- Only call the school if you really have to - calls in prevent calls out!
- Let us have your up-to-date contact details – including mobile phone number and email address. This can be done through Insight.

Examination Arrangements

Any exams or assessments that are due to take place during a period of closure will be re-arranged and sufficient notice will be given for the alternative date.

What should I do if my bus does not turn up in the morning?

If your bus fails to turn up, the school will realise this fairly quickly after 8.45 am. So don't panic. Remember, if a bus has failed to pick you up, it has also failed to pick up all the pupils along the same route.

Here is what you should do:

1. If your bus does not arrive on time, wait for at least another 15 minutes.

2. If there are only a few of you, one of the older pupils should phone school for instructions. The rest of you should wait at the bus stop until this person gets through to school and is given advice on what to do next. (Put the school number into your mobile phone: 01254 823362)
3. If nobody has a mobile and there is no phone nearby, or you can't get through to school and the bus still has not arrived, return to your own home. Only go to another pupil's house if you can't get back inside your own house or if you can't go to a close relative. Whichever house you go to, phone your parents straight away to tell them where you are and ask them to notify school so we know where you are.
4. If you go back to your own home and there is no-one in, please make sure to phone school to let us know where you are. Phone your parents if they are at work to let them know as well. If your parents are at home, ask them to take you to school. If they can't, they should phone the school for advice.
5. Walking to school: Please discuss this option with your parents and follow their advice at all times. If there are problems with buses, parents will know better than teachers whether you are safe to walk to school. Our advice is that lower school pupils [Years 7, 8 and 9] should not walk to school unless they live nearby. Upper school students [Years 10 and 11], who have parental permission to walk to school, should use their common sense. Do not put yourself at unnecessary risk. Keep to the pavements and avoid walking across fields or on the road itself.
6. NEVER EVER ACCEPT A LIFT FROM A STRANGER - however friendly, concerned, respectable or safe they may appear to be.
7. You must not go back to your own home or to a friend's house without you or your parents phoning school to let us know where you are. This is truanting. If you have gone to another pupil's house, and nobody knows about it, you could cause real anxiety to your parents who may ring the school to see if you have arrived safely.