Adverse Weather

FROM **NOVEMBER 2026**

Rye College is part of the
Aquinas Church of England Education Trust

Policy control	
Title	Adverse Weather
Responsibility	Deputy Headteacher
Review body	Head Teacher
Suite	Education
Approval date	November 2026
Review date	November 2027
Version	V1.0

Adverse Weather

The school's commitment to health and safety

Rye College is committed to providing pupils, staff and all stakeholders with a safe place to be. We will take the necessary measures to adhere to our statutory duty to protect people from harm. We also value pupils' learning and want to ensure any severe weather causes minimal disruption to pupils' routine. As such, we have put this plan in place to ensure the school remains open during adverse weather conditions.

This plan clearly outlines to members of the school community how the school is prepared in the event of adverse weather to ensure everyone remains safe, and the measures we will implement to ensure the continuity of pupils' education.

Policy and procedure

This plan has been created in line with the following legislation:

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

This plan has been created in line with the following school policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Educational Trips and Visits Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- School Uniform Policy

Adverse weather

The Head Teacher will be responsible for tracking weather forecasts and weather warnings.

If the Met Office releases a weather warning, the Head Teacher will assess the severity of it and initiate this plan where necessary.

The Head Teacher will access weather warning information by using the Met Office's website.

The Head Teacher will be responsible for monitoring traffic reports and taking action where relevant.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils' learning is not affected by adverse weather. Cost will not be a factor for the school to avoid taking reasonable steps unless the cost is disproportionately expensive.

Low temperatures, snow and ice

In the event of snowfall, the school will make every effort to clear and salt key pedestrian routes.

Parents, students and visitors should remain vigilant, as pathways may remain slippery even after treatment. Students will be reminded of safe conduct during registration.

In icy conditions, the Premises Manager will assess conditions and typically prioritise salting of:

- The English Block student entrance;
- External walkways between separate college buildings;
- The main College entrance.

Essential pathways will be maintained throughout the day wherever possible.

On days when the college is closed, the Premises Team will continue to maintain priority pathways daily to minimise the build-up of snow and ice.

During periods of severe weather, the Head Teacher may designate some or all outdoor areas as out of bounds:

- Before school;
- After school;
- During break and lunch times.

Where restrictions are put in place, alternative indoor activities will be provided.

Pupils, parents and visitors should not:

- Slide on snow or ice;
- Throw snowballs or engage in snowball fights;
- Bring snow or ice into college buildings.

The indoor temperature of the school will be reasonable. “Reasonable” is any temperature between 15 ˚C - 28 ˚C.

There are thermometers located throughout the school and readings are taken from three thermometers to calculate an average temperature. Temperatures are taken regularly throughout the day by the Premises Manager. If the average temperature falls below what is reasonable, we will implement additional control measures to bring the temperatures back to reasonable limits.

Portable heaters and additional insulative measures, e.g. blinds and windows being closed, will be used to get the temperature back to a reasonable limit.

The Premises Manager will carry out a risk assessment before using portable heaters.

The following control measures will be implemented when using portable heaters:

- The heaters will not be left unattended whilst switched on
- The heaters will be located near a plug so there is less risk of people tripping up over the wire
- The heater will remain stationary when in use
- The heater will not be used to dry things
- Only staff can use the heater

The Premises Manager will place warning signs where floors have become icy or slippery.

Parents will be informed via email, the school's social media channels and website about any restricted access to the school site.

Non-slip mats will be placed on hard floors to avoid accidents.

The Head Teacher will assess the outdoor temperature and decide whether pupils will stay indoors for breaktime and lunchtime.

Hot weather

Hot weather can cause people to become dehydrated, dizzy or lightheaded. In more severe cases, this can lead to heat cramps, fitting, heatstroke or collapse. To prevent this, we will take reasonable steps to ensure that the school remains a comfortable temperature at all times (in accordance with this plan).

The school has both natural and artificial ventilation systems in place which are serviced termly by the Premises Manager.

All windows have blinds that can be closed fully to allow for shade to be created, where necessary.

Electric fans and portable air conditioning units will be used, where necessary, to regulate the temperature of rooms where natural ventilation is either not in place or is insufficient.

Pupils will be informed to keep away from air conditioning units and fans when they are in use.

Windows will be installed with a reflective film where possible to reduce the amount of heat absorbed through the window.

There will be a relaxed dress code where outdoor temperatures exceed 28 ˚C.

Lessons and activities will be adapted where necessary to ensure pupils or staff are not overexerted.

The Head Teacher will advise parents to ensure their children are suitably equipped for the hot weather. This includes, wearing sunscreen, hats and sunglasses.

Water will be freely available and staff will ensure pupils remain hydrated throughout the day.

Wind and rain

The Head Teacher and Premises Manager will assess the forecast and any weather warnings and ensure the school site is secure before pupils enter the school.

The Premises Manager will ensure any items that are not secured to the ground are secure or brought inside, e.g. basketball hoops.

Pupils will not go outside during break and lunchtimes during extreme wind and rain.

The Premises Manager will ensure the school buildings are in good repair before and after extreme wind and rain.

Parents will be informed of any risk of flooding surrounding the school grounds via email.

The school playing fields will be out of bounds during extreme wind and rain.

Minimising disruption to education

We will adhere to our duty of care by ensuring the school remains safe and secure during times of adverse weather.

We will implement this plan in line with the Business Continuity Plan.

The Head Teacher and Premises Manager will carry out necessary risk assessments for ensuring it is safe for the school to remain open during adverse weather.

The Premises Manager will assess the school site and inform the Head Teacher by 7.00am of the state of the site to help inform decision making.

The decision to close the school is made by the Trust CEO, in consultation with the Head Teacher; however, this is deemed as a last resort and the school will take all reasonable steps to ensure continuity of education.

Access roads and pathways will be cleared and (where relevant) gritted by the Premises Manager. The condition of all access routes will be reported back to the Head Teacher and, if they are impassable, the school may have to close.

If the weather makes it difficult for staff to come into work, they will contact the Head Teacher to explain the situation.

Staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to get into work without risking their safety.

Parents who are unable to get their child to school will contact the school office and explain the situation.

Parents must make all reasonable efforts to get their child to school, if it remains open, without risking their safety.

For any pupil who cannot come into school but is scheduled to take an exam, we will liaise with the awarding body and organise alternative arrangements.

Communication procedure

The Head Teacher will keep parents up-to-date with the condition of the school and will release a statement on email, the school website, local media and on social media regarding the school's condition and whether it remains open.

Staff are aware that they should contact the staffabsence@ryecollege.co.uk if they are unable to attend school due to adverse weather.

The Head Teacher will email all staff to communicate the condition of the school to them.

If there is no news on the school website, social media or local media, staff, parents and other stakeholders should assume this means the school remains open with no problems.

Necessary closures

The decision to close the school will be taken as a last resort – this decision will be made by the Trust CEO, in consultation with the Head Teacher.

We will not jeopardise the safety and security of our staff or pupils and will close the school if keeping it open will put our school community at risk.

If the school needs to be closed, we will follow the procedures outlined below.

If the weather conditions rapidly deteriorate during the school day, the Head Teacher will assess the safety of the site and contact parents if pupils need to be collected early.

The decision to close the school before or during the school day will be made by the Head Teacher. The college will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely;
2. Conditions on site are dangerous;
3. Conditions are considered to be, or anticipated to become, too hazardous for travel.

The Education Director is kept informed throughout.

The Premises Manager and Head Teacher will be responsible for ensuring the school has been evacuated and the site is secure in the event of the early closure of the school.

Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this plan will be monitored by the Head Teacher, and any necessary amendments will be made during review.

If an incident occurs during adverse weather that the school was not prepared for, the Head Teacher will review this plan and update it accordingly.

All updates will be communicated to relevant stakeholders.

If no significant changes occur, the plan will be reviewed annually.

The following guidance is attached:

1 Severe Weather and Emergency Closure Arrangements: Information for Parents and Carers

2 Early Release Procedures During Severe Weather: Information for Parents and Carers

1 Severe Weather and Emergency Closure Arrangements: Information for Parents and Carers

Our commitment to pupils

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff will always be our priority.

The College will remain open wherever it is safe and practical to do so. In all circumstances, we will make every effort to continue providing education and support for pupils. If severe weather affects normal operations, we may introduce a delayed start or, in exceptional circumstances, close the College.

Should pupils be unable to return home safely, we will continue to supervise and care for them until appropriate arrangements can be made.

At a glance

In the event of severe weather:

- The College will remain open wherever possible.
- A delayed start may be introduced, with registration taking place at **11:00am**.
- If closure is necessary, a decision will normally be communicated by **7:30am**.
- Parents and carers will be notified through Arbor, the College website, social media and the East Sussex school closures website:
- Pupils who cannot travel safely should contact the College as soon as possible.
- If the College closes, remote learning will be provided through Microsoft Teams.

How we will communicate

If severe weather affects the College, updates will be shared through the following channels:

- Arbor messaging
- The College website: www.ryecollege.co.uk
- The College Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ryecollegeuk
- East Sussex County Council school closures website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosures

Parents and carers are expected to monitor these communication channels when severe weather is forecast and disruption is possible.

Delayed start procedure

Where weather conditions make travel difficult, but the College site remains safe to open, a delayed start may be implemented.

In these circumstances:

- Families should delay their journey to the College.
- Students should arrive for 11:00am registration.
- Students should attend in full school uniform.
- Suitable outdoor clothing and footwear should be worn to ensure safe travel to and from the site.
- Further updates will be communicated through the College's usual communication channels.

If the College is required to close before the school day begins

If severe weather conditions make it unsafe for the College to open, the Head Teacher may decide to close the site.

This decision will be based on:

- Weather warnings and forecasts.
- Information from site staff.
- Road and travel conditions.
- Public transport availability; and
- Any other relevant local intelligence.

Attendance during severe weather

We recognise that severe weather can affect different areas in different ways and that some families may experience travel difficulties even when the College remains open.

Parents and carers should:

- Contact the College as soon as possible if their child is delayed or unable to attend.
- Use email wherever possible to help keep telephone lines free: office@ryecollege.co.uk
- Avoid assuming that the College is closed unless official confirmation has been issued.

Please be aware that the College switchboard can become extremely busy during periods of severe weather.

Where local conditions prevent safe travel, absences may be authorised upon notification to the College. However, parents acting on the assumption that the College has closed, without official confirmation or without informing the College of their circumstances, may risk their child receiving an unauthorised absence.

If the College is formally closed, all pupils will be recorded with an authorised absence.

If severe weather develops during the school day

If weather conditions deteriorate significantly during the day, the Head Teacher may make the decision to close the College early.
This decision will be based on:

- Advice from site staff;
- Public transport information;
- Current weather warnings; and
- Forecast conditions both locally and in surrounding areas.

We will communicate any decision through the channels detailed above.

During periods of severe weather, the College may also suspend extra-curricular activities and after-school events where necessary to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

Closure or early release will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Our duty of care

If severe weather prevents pupils from returning home safely, the College will continue to provide supervision and care until suitable arrangements can be made.

Wherever possible, this supervision will be provided by at least two members of staff, including a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

To help us manage any emergency safely and effectively, we ask parents and carers not to:

- Telephone the College requesting the individual dismissal of their child unless absolutely necessary; or
- Contact their child directly to instruct them to leave the site.

Any decision regarding dismissal or release of pupils must be made by the College and will always take account of the safety and wellbeing of all pupils in our care.

Learning from home during closure

If the College is closed, staff will provide remote learning through Microsoft Teams wherever possible.

Pupils should expect:

- Live lessons to be scheduled in line with their normal timetable;
- Lesson links and instructions to be provided through Arbor;
- Lessons to begin at the usual lesson start times; and
- Attendance and engagement to be maintained wherever possible.

Where a live lesson is not available, pupils should complete independent study, coursework, revision activities or any work set by their teachers.

Additional online learning resources are available through:

- BBC Bitesize: www.bbc.co.uk/education
- Oak National Academy: www.thenational.academy

Monitoring weather conditions

The College monitors weather warnings and forecasts regularly when severe weather is anticipated. Decisions will be informed by official guidance, local conditions and transport information to ensure that the safety of pupils and staff remains our foremost consideration.

Thank you for your understanding and support in helping us keep all members of our school community safe during periods of adverse weather.

2 Early Release Procedures During Severe Weather: Information for Parents and Carers

Key principles

The College will remain open wherever it is safe and practical to do so.

Should severe weather result in a partial or full closure becoming necessary, the safety and wellbeing of pupils will remain our overriding priority.

In a worst-case scenario, pupils will remain supervised and cared for by the College until safe arrangements can be made for them to return home.

College status during severe weather

When the Adverse Weather Procedure is implemented, the College will communicate one of the following operating statuses:

- College open as normal
- College subject to partial closure
- College closed

A partial closure may involve the staged release of specific year groups while the College remains open for others.

Communication with families

If a partial or full closure is implemented, the College will communicate this through the following channels:

- Arbor messaging;
- The College website;
- Facebook and other social media platforms;
- Email communication;
- East Sussex County Council's school closure notifications.

Parents and carers should ensure that contact details held by the College are kept up to date.

Principles for releasing students

Before any student is released, the College will undertake a risk assessment taking account of:

- Current and forecast weather conditions;
- Road and transport conditions;

- Availability of public transport;
- Pupil age and vulnerability;
- Parental instructions and preferences;
- Safeguarding considerations.

No pupil will be required to leave the College where it is considered unsafe for them to do so.

Pupils who cannot travel home safely will remain under the supervision of College staff until suitable arrangements have been made.

Parental preferences

The College will use parental preferences to inform decisions wherever possible.
Parents and carers may indicate that their child should:

- Leave College immediately;
- Leave College with a named friend or relative;
- Remain at College until collected.

In the absence of a parental response, the College will assume that the pupil should remain on site until collected by a parent, carer or authorised adult.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that the College holds accurate and up-to-date information regarding their preferences and emergency contact arrangements.

Order of pupil release

Subject to prevailing conditions, transport availability, safeguarding requirements and individual circumstances, pupils may be released in the following order:

1. Year 11 and Year 10 pupils;
2. Year 9 pupils;
3. Year 8 and Year 7 pupils.

Where parental preferences permit and it is considered safe to do so, older pupils may accompany younger siblings when leaving the College.

The College reserves the right to vary this order, if circumstances require.

Collection arrangements

Where transport services are disrupted or weather conditions make independent travel unsafe, parents and carers may be required to collect their child.

Alternatively, parents may nominate a trusted adult to collect on their behalf. The College may ask the nominated adult to provide identification before a pupil is released into their care.

For pupils living in outlying villages or areas particularly affected by severe weather, the College's preferred arrangement is collection by a parent, carer or authorised adult.

Duty of care

The College recognises that severe weather can create uncertainty and disruption for families.

However, the safety of pupils remains paramount. Pupils will continue to be supervised on site for as long as necessary until safe travel or collection arrangements can be confirmed.

Closure or early release decisions will always be taken in the best interests of pupil safety and welfare.