

Policy Name: Catastrophic Events and Continuity of Operations - SCHS
Policy Number: ADM 9.13
Title of Policy Owner: Campus Director & Dean of Academic Affairs - SCHS
Policy Type: RHEI/Shared Services BSMCON SCHS SOMI
Approved by: RHEI Leadership Team
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Policy Status: Approved

I. Policy

Emergency planning, including continuity of operations planning, is a critical function for Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS). SCHS will mitigate the impact of operational disruptions to its campus community by implementing policies, procedures, and capabilities that provide continuity of operations in case of a catastrophic event.

II. Purpose

To provide guidance for a safe and efficient response to disruptive events that impact SCHS's faculty, staff, and students.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all SCHS students, faculty, and staff.

IV. Definitions

None

V. Policy Details

Catastrophic Events and Continuity of Operations

SCHS uses specific policies and procedures regarding catastrophic events and program discontinuances in order to limit the length of time that students are displaced.

Continuity of Operations

By leveraging highly available educational technologies such as the Learning Management System (LMS – Blackboard) and the Student Information System (SIS – Anthology Student) which are hosted in the “cloud”, the likelihood of significant service interruption is minimized. This is achieved by ensuring third parties providing such services adhere to Bon Secours Mercy Health’s policy CP-PO-12.0-R1.0 which requires them to, “ensure the continued availability of identified services and information systems through the development of Disaster Recovery Plans and Business Continuity Plans.”

In the event on-ground classes are not able to be held in the originally designated

delivery format, the Campus Director and Dean of Academic Affairs will activate the Instructional Continuity Plan. For programs that are authorized for distance education, courses may continue in a virtual format such as synchronous web conferencing or asynchronous learning. For programs that are not authorized for distance education, class may be rescheduled, or students may be directed to continue working on their own, read course material, or work on an assigned project. If the class is offered on the web or rescheduled, faculty are to record class and offer students the link in writing on Blackboard within 24-48 hours to give access to students who could not participate. Any additional instructions on altering requirements, grading procedures, or assignment deadlines are to be made in writing on Blackboard and communicated clearly. Asynchronous courses may proceed without interruptions; however, faculty should provide consideration to students with more difficulty accessing the internet and campus resources if campus is closed.

The following SCHS's policies (available at <https://www.schs.edu/policies>) and procedures are also intended to help mitigate the impact of emergency events on College operations:

- ADM 1.04 Records Management: provides guidance for ensuring the integrity, confidentiality, and security of all documents and records created, received, or maintained in the course of institutional business.
- ADM 5.01 Financial Refund: provides guidance for ensuring that financial refunds are processed timely and consistently and in accordance with SCHS policy, and applicable federal, state and accreditation requirements. In the event that a catastrophic event occurs, the RHEI Leadership Team maintains the authority to enact additional financial refunds to students that are deemed appropriate during such circumstances.
- ADM 9.10 Campus Safety and Security: provides guidance for preventing or minimizing threats while also preparing to effectively handle any emergencies that may occur.
- Emergency Management and Evacuation Procedures (EMEP): provides detailed emergency instructions for SCHS associates, students, and visitors to ensure safety and protection of property during fire, severe weather, loss of utilities, acts of God, and other such emergencies. This document is available on RHEI's Microsoft Teams site for associates, on SCHS's Learning Management System (Blackboard) for students, and upon request.

Program Discontinuances

SCHS has the financial commitment of its parent health system – Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH). In the unlikely event that SCHS cannot deliver the instruction for which students have contracted, SCHS commits to one or more of the following courses of action, depending on each individual student's needs:

- Providing a reasonable alternative for delivering instruction and/or services for which students have paid

- Providing reasonable financial refund for the education students did not receive
- Providing assistance for transferring earned credits to other institutions

SCHS students will be notified in person by College administration and then counseled about their options by their advisors. In accordance with 602.24(c) of federal requirements for catastrophic events, a teach-out plan will be submitted to the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) prior to its implementation.

VI. Attachments

None

VII. Related Policies

ADM 1.04 Records Management
ADM 5.01 Financial Refund
ADM 9.10 Campus Safety and Security
BSMH CP-PO-12.0-R1.0 Business Continuity Management

VIII. Disclaimers

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretions, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

IX. Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Prepared by
1.0	02/01/2021	Establish Policy	Dean of Administration
1.1	05/05/2023	Triennial Review	Dean of Administration