

Policy Title	Catastrophic Events and Continuity of Operations
Policy Number:	ADM 9.13
Department:	SCHS
Functional Area:	Academic Affairs
Contributing Department	
Approved by:	RHEI Leadership Team
Effective Date:	8/1/2023
Version:	1
Status:	Approved
Manual	To be entered by Compliance360 System administrators or N/A if not in C360
Section	ADM 9

I. Mission, Vision and Values

This policy reflects our commitment to human dignity, integrity, compassion, stewardship, and service by guiding decisions and actions that uphold respect for all individuals and promote excellence in our work.

This policy aligns with our mission of extending the compassionate ministry of Jesus by improving the health and well-being of our communities and providing good help to those in need, especially the poor, dying, and underserved by ensuring that our practices support ethical, effective, and accountable service across all areas of the organization.

II. 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.

III. Purpose

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

IV. Scope

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

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. Definitions

None

VII. Attachments

N/A

VIII. Related Policies and Procedures

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

IX. Regulatory Notices

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS), a department owned and controlled by Bon Secours Mercy Health Petersburg, LLC (d/b/a Southside Medical Center), and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

X. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Description	Supersedes, if applicable	Prepared By
1.0	2/1/2021	N/A	Establish Policy	N/A	Dean of Administration
1.1	5/5/2023	5/5/2026	Triennial Review	1.0	Dean of Administration

1	5/5/2023	5/5/2027	Version Changed- BMH Template Adopted	1.0	Dean of Administration
---	----------	----------	--	-----	---------------------------

This policy/procedure/guideline is not intended to establish a standard of clinical or non-clinical care or practice. Rather, this policy/procedure/guideline creates a general tool to help guide decision-making with the understanding that different action(s) may be necessary in response to the totality of the circumstances presented.

Sites revised 05/06/2025- Bon Secours Mercy Health adopts the above policy, procedure, policy & procedure, guideline, manual / reference guide / instructions, or principle / standard / guidance document for all Bon Secours Mercy Health entities including, but not limited to, facilities doing business as Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center, St. Vincent – St. Charles Hospital, St. Vincent – St. Anne Hospital, Mercy Health – Perrysburg Medical Center, Mercy Health – Tiffin Hospital, Mercy Health – Willard Hospital, Mercy Health – Defiance Hospital, Mercy Health Allen Hospital LLC, Mercy Health - Lorain Hospital, Mercy Health St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital, Mercy Health St. Joseph Warren Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Rita's Medical Center, Mercy Health – Springfield Regional Medical Center, Mercy Health - Urbana Hospital, Mercy Health - Anderson Hospital, Mercy Health - Clermont Hospital, Mercy Health – Fairfield Hospital, Mercy Health - West Hospital, The Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health, Mercy Health – Kings Mills Hospital, LLC, Mercy Health - Lourdes Hospital LLC, Mercy Health – Marcum and Wallace Hospital, Chesapeake Hospital Corporation DBA Rappahannock General, Maryview Hospital, Bon Secours Richmond Community, Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center, Bon Secours – St. Mary's Hospital, Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center, Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital, Bon Secours - Southside Medical Center, Bon Secours Mercy Health Franklin, LLC, Southern Virginia Medical Center, and Bon Secours Harbour View Medical Center. This also may apply to Bon Secours Mercy Health Medical Group LLC and its medical group affiliates.