Sawtry Village Academy

School closure due to unforeseen circumstances

Version Number:	1.2
Applicable To:	Sawtry Village Academy
Committee:	SLT / Academy Council
Approved by Academy Council on:	November 2026
Review Cycle:	Every 2 years
Date of Next Review:	September 2028

1 Purpose

Unforeseen circumstances which may cause the Academy to close occur rarely, however, when they come they are disruptive and can cause anxiety and stress. Understandably, many parents ring the Academy, for example if snow starts falling heavily, to seek advice. This guidance sets out the Academy's response to unforeseen circumstances including adverse weather conditions, should they occur.

2 Application

2.1 Remaining open

It is our intention to remain open unless we are forced to close because there is a risk to the health and safety of staff and students. This event of Academy closure is highly unlikely and will be avoided where possible. There is no need for staff or parents to contact the school to check whether or not the school is open.

2.2 Academy closure before the school day

Decisions about closing the Academy or sending students home early are always difficult to make. We need to gather reliable information before making a judgement.

In making this decision we will gather information from a variety of sources including checking weather reports (if relevant to the decision), getting advice from the bus companies, and assessing what is happening elsewhere in the area. Some buses may not be available. Operators have to decide whether running vehicles on particular routes in snow and ice for example 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.

The decision to close or partially close the Academy will be made in the morning by 7.45 am, by the Principal in consultation with site staff and Executive Principal/CEO.
If we are closed, there will be an announcement on:

- The Academy website www.sawtryva.org immediately. If there is no message to the contrary, we are open as normal.
- The Academy Facebook page: en-gb.facebook.com/sawtryva.org/
- An email will be sent to all parents/carers who are registered as contacts on the school MIS.
- The Cambridgeshire County Council website also operates a complete list of schools closures, due to snow: there will be a link to this page from the front page of www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

In the event that the Academy is open but a particular bus route is inaccessible, we will try to inform parents via our website, emails and Facebook but, if they have not been informed otherwise, students should wait at the bus stop for 15 minutes after scheduled arrival time and if the bus does not arrive by this time they should go home rather than remain out in cold or snowy weather.

Parents who work are urged to always have a contingency plan for their children which covers an event such as a school closure so that they are assured that the children will be in a safe environment should normal arrangements be curtailed. Parents are reminded that closure could happen at any time and is not always weather related.

2.3 Academy closure part way through the school day

If unforeseen circumstances, such as heavy snow, storms and facility issues etc occur during the day there are three possible decisions to be made by the Principal:

- keep the Academy open.

- send children and staff home early;
  - students will only be sent home where the bus companies inform us that they have decided to leave early or can accommodate a request to leave early. Should parents wish to check whether their child's bus is leaving early, they should contact the relevant transport provider.
  - No other students will be allowed to leave school early without reassurance from the student that they can gain access to their home
  - If we believe that any student is at risk of being unable to travel home safely, we will either contact their parent/carer or facilitate this contact for the student through the use of a school phone
- close Academy the next day (staff to attend if possible). This decision will be based on the risks involved to students in travelling to and from home and the probability of large numbers of staff and students not being able to reach the Academy the next day. Or the risk being in the building may cause others.
- A decision about remote learning or provisions available will be emailed to parents by the school if a decision is made for that method to be used.

We will use the procedures above to announce such an event and also make phones available for students who may be concerned that they will not be able to get home or gain access to their home for whatever reason. Where possible, students will be given a letter containing the necessary information. The Academy website will be updated as necessary. We will provide running updates via social media as far as is practicable.

3 Students sitting a formal examination

Students sitting a formal examination on a day when the Academy is forced to close must contact the main reception number 01487 830701 by 8.30am to be given further instructions as to what course of action has been decided.

3.2 In the majority of cases if a student is able to get into the Academy, safely, even if it is closed to other students, they should do so and the examination will take place as scheduled. If a student is unable to attend, the Academy will report the matter to the relevant Examination Board who will decide on the future action to be taken.

SLT (Updated October 2026)
Leadership
This guidance will next be reviewed in September 2028