

Administrative Procedure 131

INCLEMENT WEATHER / HAZARDOUS ROAD CONDITIONS

Background

Schools shall remain open to students during the times and dates established in the school calendar(s). School buses are to operate on all school instructional days except when inclement weather and/or hazardous road conditions or other emergency reasons constitute a significant hazard to the safety and wellbeing of school bus students. School buildings may be closed if the health and safety of students and staff are at risk due to inclement weather.

Procedures

1. Student Transportation
 - 1.1. School bus service may be suspended by the Superintendent when Environment Canada reports a temperature of -40 degrees Celsius with or without wind chill in one or more regions
 - 1.2. School bus service may also be suspended by the Superintendent due to adverse weather, road conditions, or other factors that pose a safety risk to students including but not limited to the following:
 - 1.2.1. extreme snowfall,
 - 1.2.2. limited visibility due to blowing snow conditions or heavy fog
 - 1.3. Suspension of bus services may be limited to a specific region of the Division
 - 1.4. Suspension of bus services may be done on a route by route basis
 - 1.5. The Superintendent will endeavor to make a decision regarding school bus suspension as early in the morning as possible, or the previous night if conditions are adverse and expected to continue
 - 1.6. When buses are cancelled, schools are open to students. If large numbers of students are absent due to bus cancellations, classes may be modified.
2. Schools
 - 2.1. The safety of the students shall be the primary criterion to determine whether a school remains open.
 - 2.2. Schools shall remain open on all scheduled school days, if at all possible. However, in extreme situations, the Superintendent may determine the school shall be closed in its entirety.
 - 2.3. In the event that a school is closed in its entirety, the Principal shall ensure all parents/guardians are notified.
 - 2.4. Principals will ensure that a plan is implemented to open all commonly used school entrances by 8:30 a.m. or the normal opening time (whichever is earlier) to accommodate students and parents/guardians who are not aware of school closures.

- 2.5. Principals will ensure that appropriate educational arrangements are made for any students who do arrive at school.
 - 2.6. Should weather conditions become extremely adverse during a regular school day; the Principal shall request approval from the Superintendent to initiate proceedings for an early departure of students.
 - 2.7. The school shall contact all parents/guardians to ensure that someone is home to receive the child. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted the student will remain at the school until the parent/guardian has been contacted to make alternate arrangements.
3. Parents/Guardian
 - 3.1. If parents/guardians decide to send or take their child to school in inclement weather it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that the child is adequately clothed for the existing weather conditions.
 - 3.2. If parents/guardians decide to keep their child home it is the parents/guardians responsibility to ensure that the child does assigned homework, so that the child does not fall behind those who attend school.
 - 3.3. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange to pick the child up from the school no later than normal bus drop-off time when afternoon bussing is cancelled.
4. School buses
 - 4.1. No school bus shall operate on days when the temperature in the area is equal to or lower than -40 degrees Celsius with or without wind chill at 6:00 a.m., as determined by a sole weather information service selected annually by the Transportation Coordinator; or when inclement weather and/or hazardous road conditions or other emergency reasons constitute a significant hazard to the safety and wellbeing of school bus students.
 - 4.2. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Transportation Coordinator, may cancel buses when weather conditions are so inclement, or road conditions so hazardous, as to constitute a risk to the students being transported.
 - 4.3. Individual operators are granted discretionary power to cancel or alter their route to ensure the safety of the students being transported, and will advise the parents/guardians of the students on their route, the principals of the affected schools, and the Transportation Coordinator.
 - 4.3.1. Where visibility is reduced and the driver feels it is unsafe to stop the driver will not stop and the parents/guardians will be notified that the students cannot safely be picked up/dropped off and alternate arrangements may be made
 - 4.3.2. If unsafe road conditions occur the driver may make a decision to suspend an individual route. If the route is in progress, and the driver may safely do so, the students will be returned home. If the driver may not safely return the students home the bus will be secured and parents/guardians contacted to pick up the students. Before a student may be dropped off at home the driver must ensure the student has access to the residence and the parent/guardian has been contacted.

- 4.4. The Transportation Coordinator shall communicate any information about cancellation or alteration of service to the Communications Officer, who shall share this information through division-based communications platforms and broadcast media serving the area.
- 4.5. When road conditions deteriorate throughout the day the Principal and/or Transportation Department will make a request to the Superintendent to have the busses leave school prior to regular dismissal time. The Principal will designate school staff to contact parents/guardians. Parents/guardians must be reached prior to students being dropped off at home; if parents/guardians are unable to be contacted students must remain at school until they can be picked up.
 - 4.5.1 In the event of early departure, bus drivers shall take all necessary precautions to ensure that students arrive home safely.
 - 4.5.2 The Transportation Coordinator shall develop, at the beginning of each school year, a communication plan to notify bus drivers.
 - 4.5.3 In the event school busses don't operate the individual Operator will advise the parents/guardians of the students on his or her route.
5. Parents hold the responsibility for deciding to send a child to their bus stop or to school even though buses and schools may be operational.
6. Staff
 - 6.1 Staff members should not travel on roads deemed to be hazardous.
 - 6.2 Staff members need to notify their immediate supervisor and remain in contact with the supervisor as weather and road conditions change.
 - 6.3 Staff are expected to monitor weather and road conditions and if conditions become more favorable, staff members are expected to travel to work.

Reference: Section 59, Education Act
Employment Standards Act