

Administrative Procedure 131

INCLEMENT WEATHER DISRUPTIONS TO TRANSPORTATION AND CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

Background

The Division recognizes certain weather conditions may occur that may be hazardous to the safety of staff and/or students.

The Division also recognizes the decision to cancel buses, cancel classes, and/or close schools to staff and students requires careful deliberation and early communication.

The Superintendent expects teachers and support staff to make every reasonable effort to be in attendance when school is in operation during inclement weather or emergency closures.

School-based administration is in the best position to determine whether support staff are required to work during times of inclement weather or emergency closure of schools.

The Division believes the parent is the primary decision-maker for students and parents must ultimately decide whether or not they will send their child(ren) to school.

Procedures

1. Decisions on the bussing and class cancellations shall take into consideration the following weather related factors:
 - 1.1 Condition of the roads;
 - 1.2 Outside temperature;
 - 1.3 Wind chill factor;
 - 1.4 Visibility (blowing snow, fog, etc.);
 - 1.5 RCMP travel advisories; and
 - 1.6 Weather warnings issue by Environment Canada.

2. Bus Operations

The decision to operate buses, except where schools are closed, considers the authority given to individual bus operators/drivers.

- 2.1 Under extenuating circumstances and with the approval of the School Principal and in consultation with the Director of Transportation, bus operators/drivers may make arrangements with their respective school parents for earlier than normal dismissal of their bus route students, or decide not to operate due to adverse weather and/or road conditions as per the procedures in the Transportation Policy Handbook.

- 2.2 When inclement weather conditions exist, bus operators/drivers are granted the discretion to make additional stops and/or to extend bus routes onto private property to ensure that students are delivered safely.
- 2.3 If the R.C.M.P. close and/or strongly discourage travel on particular highways, the Director of Transportation will consult with the local detachment and make a joint decision on bus routes impacted by the advisory. The decision will be communicated to bus operators/drivers by the Director of Transportation.
- 2.4 Notification to cancel any or all bus operations will be provided to the public through advisories to local media outlets, the Division's NLSD-2-Go app, the Transportation section of the Division's website (www.nlsd.ab.ca), and social media.

3. Class Cancellations

- 3.1 Classes will be cancelled when:
 - 3.1.1 the Wind Chill exceeds –45 degrees Celsius, or
 - 3.1.2 the outside air temperature as measured at 4 Wing or at Lac La Biche Airport is at or exceeds –40 degrees Celsius.
- 3.2 Schools throughout the Division will not necessarily be affected concurrently.
- 3.3 When buses do not operate, or when classes are cancelled, or when schools are closed, the resulting student absence will be considered excusable.
- 3.4 Notification to cancel scheduled classes will be provided to the public through advisories to local media outlets, the Divisions NLSD-2-Go app, the Transportation section of the Division's website (www.nlsd.ab.ca), and social media.

4. Staff

- 4.1 Health and safety issues with certified and support staff must take utmost priority during times requiring emergency closure of facilities or during times of inclement weather.
 - 4.1.1 School-based administration must determine another location in which staff can work during emergency closure or inclement weather if required.
 - 4.1.2 The Principal shall decide whether the support staff member has made a reasonable effort to be in attendance at the school or at the approved alternate site during inclement weather or emergency closure of schools.
 - 4.1.3 If the support staff member disagrees with the decision of the Principal, the staff member may appeal to the Superintendent.

5. Early Closure

Where sudden or unexpected inclement weather requires the early dismissal of a school facility, busing area, or all Division schools the following will occur:

- 5.1 The Superintendent, or designate, shall communicate with the Principals and the Director of Transportation.
- 5.2 The Director of Transportation will contact the appropriate bus Contractor(s).
- 5.3 When children are to be sent home due to inclement weather the school will contact the parents/guardians to ensure acceptable arrangements are available upon arriving home. Where this cannot be accomplished, the next best alternative shall be exercised.

6. School Closure

On the rare occasion that a school facility is closed due to fire, water, or some other major facility occupational hazard, the following will occur:

- 6.1 The Superintendent, or designate, will decide on the length of school closures and the individuals affected by the closure (i.e., students, teaching staff, support staff, etc.).
- 6.2 Wherever possible, notification of the decision to close schools should be given on the day prior to the planned cancellation. Where this is not possible, official notification to local media outlets, through social media, the NLSD-2-Go app, busing officials and Principals should occur as soon as possible.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of each Principal to have someone at or near the school prior to normal opening time to ensure students who have not received the communication are able to access the facility until alternative arrangements can be made.

7. Parent Responsibility

- 7.1 When inclement weather conditions exist and school closure has not been effected, parents must use their own discretion in sending their child(ren) to school.
- 7.2 Parents must ensure that school principals have accurate and up to date contact information.
- 7.3 Parents should anticipate the possibility of disruptions to transportation and class to their child's routine and plan accordingly.

8. School Considerations

- 8.1 Schools must obtain alternative emergency contacts for students at the time of registration.

- 8.2 In the event of bus or class cancellations or school closures during the provincial exam schedule students missing an examination may be exempted as per Alberta Education guidelines.

Reference: Section 56, Education Act
Employment Standards Act

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