



# Administrative Procedure 131 INCLEMENT WEATHER DISRUPTIONS TO TRANSPORTATION AND CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

*DRAFT UPDATE - January 2021*

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## Background

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.

The Division recognizes certain weather conditions may constitute a safety hazard to students and/or staff.

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.

The Superintendent or designate in consultation with the school-based administration will determine whether support staff are required to work during times of inclement weather or emergency closure of schools.

## Procedures

1. Decisions on busing 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 issued by Environment Canada.

### 2. Bus Operations

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

- 2.1. The Director of Transportation may cancel routes either individually or collectively when inclement weather or road conditions constitute a safety hazard to the students being transported. School buses will not operate in the event of the following conditions:

- 2.1.1. When the outside temperature reaches -40 degrees Celsius or colder, or
- 2.1.2. When the wind chill factor reaches -40 degrees Celsius and the air temperature is -30 degrees or colder, or
- 2.1.3. When road conditions or visibility are significantly impacted by heavy snowfall, blowing snow, freezing rain, heavy fog or other circumstances.
- 2.2. Bus routes assigned as Special Needs routes with wheelchair capabilities will not operate when the outside air temperature is -35 degrees Celsius or colder, or when the wind chill factor is -35 degrees Celsius or colder and the air temperature is at least -30 degrees Celsius or colder.
- 2.3. The decision to cancel routes based on air temperature, wind chill or other factors, will be made at the discretion of the Director of Transportation in consultation with the Superintendent or designate. When possible, a decision will be made prior to 6 am.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Notification to cancel or delay any or all bus operations will be provided on a timely basis using established NLPS communications tools, the NLPS website, and local media outlets.
- 2.7. In the absence of a decision by the Director of Transportation, individual bus drivers may cancel or alter their route to ensure the safety of students being transported. If such cancellations or alterations occur, the bus drivers are individually responsible for notifying parents/guardians on that route and to notify the Director of Transportation. Additional notification of bus route cancellations or delays will be provided by the Transportation Department using NLPS communication tools as appropriate.

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 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. School may remain open when classes are cancelled.
- 3.5. Notification to cancel scheduled classes will be provided to the public using established NLPS communication tools, the NLPS website, and local media outlets.

#### 4. School Closure

On rare occasions a school may be closed due to significant circumstances or events.

- 4.1. Emergent school closures are at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- 4.2. Schools are not open to students during school closure.
- 4.3. Notification of a school closure will be provided using established NLPS communication tools, the NLPS website and local media outlets.
- 4.4. Staff attendance during school closure is outlined in Section 6.
- 4.5. It is the responsibility of each principal to have someone at or near the school prior to established opening time to ensure students who have not received the communication are able to access the facility until alternate arrangements can be made.

#### 5. Early Closure

Where sudden or unexpected inclement weather, or other emergent circumstances, 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 parents/guardians to ensure acceptable arrangements are available upon arriving home. Where this cannot be accomplished, the next best alternative shall be exercised.
- 5.4. Additional notification will be provided using established NLPS communication tools, the NLPS website, and local media outlets.

#### 6. Staff

- 6.1. 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.
  - 6.1.1. School-based administration in collaboration with the Superintendent or designate must determine another location in which staff can work during emergency closure or inclement weather if required.
  - 6.1.2. HR 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. In the event that a reasonable effort has not been made, HR will decide what type of leave will be assigned.
  - 6.1.3. If the support staff member disagrees with the decision of HR, the staff member may appeal to the Superintendent.
- 6.2. Working from home is not an option.

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 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 apply for an exemption as per Alberta Education guidelines.
- 8.3. Schools shall contact the parents/guardians of students who are absent when the parents/guardians have not called the school to confirm the absence. In these events the absence is still excusable. This is a part of our Division's practice of safe arrival of our students.

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**Reference:** Section 56, Education Act  
Employment Standards Act

**Revised:** March 23, 2015