

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY No. 805

CLOSURE, SEVERE WEATHER AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Given the geographic size of Chinook School Division it believes that enabling policy providing local discretion in dealing with weather conditions is both prudent and appropriate.

The Director of Education, or designate is authorized to dismiss students, discontinue transportation services, cancel classes, and/or close school in emergency situations.

PROCEDURES

1. Responsibility of the Director of Education

- a. The Director of Education or designate, in consultation with the principal(s) may cancel classes or close one or more schools in the Division.
- b. The Director or designate is to instruct the Manager of Transportation to inform bus drivers when classes have been cancelled, students have been dismissed, or a school has been closed.
- d. The Director of Education or designate, in consultation with the Manager of Transportation, shall cancel all bus routes in affected school areas when the temperature reaches -40°C.
- e. Buses are to be cancelled pending consideration of the following factors:
 - Severe wind chill of -45° C. or greater.
 - Adverse road conditions.
 - Limited visibility because of fog or blowing snow.
 - Watches and warnings announced by Environment Canada through its telephone information services, web site or through local media.
- f. The decision to cancel morning buses is to be made by **6:30 a.m.**
- g. The decision to cancel afternoon buses is to be made no later than **2:00 p.m.**

2. *Responsibility of Principals*

- a. Principals in consultation with the Director are responsible for deciding when to dismiss students, cancel classes, or close the school to ensure the safety and well being of students. Safety and well-being of students refers to any matters, natural or otherwise that may be construed by the principal to affect the safety and well being of the students.
- b. The principal is to request that news media broadcast pertinent information for parents and students, including:
 - i. Cancellation of bus runs.
 - ii. Cancellation of classes (but the school remains open).
 - iii. Closure of the school.
- c. When students are dismissed, the principal is to arrange for each student to be directed to a safe, supervised location and then inform respective parents or guardians.
- d. The principal is to inform the principal(s) of any other school(s) and other appropriate authorities affected by the decision.
- e. If necessary, the principal is responsible for billeting students and staff at the school. The division will assume any costs incurred. Insofar as possible the normal schedule of classes will resume the next morning and school buses will follow their normal afternoon schedules.
- f. The principal is to maintain a record of emergency residences for all bus students.
- g. The principal is to ensure that the school is accessible to students when classes have been dismissed early or when classes have been cancelled for the day.
- h. Under no circumstances are buses to commence their routes prior to normal departure time.
- i. Schools may be closed only when it is impossible for any Chinook staff to open the school and after all parents of all students attending that school have been contacted directly, informing them of the closure, by the principal or designate.

3. Responsibility of Bus Drivers

- a. Each bus driver is responsible for deciding to stop the operation of his/her bus to maintain the safety and well being of his/her passengers. Refer to 1 (d) and (e) above.
- b. Having made such a decision, the bus driver is to inform the parents by telephone or media, then the principal(s). The principal is to contact the Manager of Transportation.
- c. Under no circumstances should buses start on the route at the height of a winter storm. Refer to 1 (e) above.
- d. Under no circumstances should bus drivers commence their routes prior to normal departure time. Refer to 2 (h) above.
- e. If the decision is made before students have been picked up from home, the driver is to inform parents or guardians of all passengers that the bus will not operate.
- f. If the decision to stop operation is made after students have been picked up, the driver is to arrange to deliver each student to a safe, supervised destination. Drivers are to inform parents or guardians of the location of the students. When appropriate, the driver should also inform the principal and Manager of Transportation
- g. Bus drivers have the right to refuse transportation to students who are not dressed appropriately for weather conditions.

4. Responsibility of Manager of Transportation

- a. The Manager of Transportation is to facilitate communication among schools, bus drivers, and parents or guardians.
- b. The Manager of Transportation is to inform the Director or designate whenever a bus operation has been altered or cancelled due to weather conditions.
- c. In the event bus service is cancelled pursuant to 1(b) or (e), the Manager of Transportation or designate shall notify the bus drivers and principals through the local media and internal communication.

5. *Responsibility of Teacher and Other School Personnel*

- a. Except when notified that the school is closed pursuant to 2 (a), all teachers and personnel are expected to be in attendance for the purpose of performing their normal or related duties. As a rule, staff will be expected to attend school in instances where buses are able to run. Personnel are not to lose pay when informed that the school has been closed. Staff is expected to be at school but will not lose pay in instances when travel to the school would put their lives in peril.
- b. Upon receipt of a written explanation, the Director or designate may deal with individual instances of absence due to weather or other hazardous situations.

6. *Responsibility of Parents or Guardians*

- a. Parents or guardians of all bus students are to arrange for appropriate emergency residences for the individual students.
- b. Parents and guardians always have the right to keep their children at home during severe weather condition, or when in the considered opinion of the parent or guardian, the safety of their children may be in jeopardy.
- c. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children are appropriately clothed.