

132 - INCLEMENT WEATHER

Background

Schools in the Wild Rose School Division will stay open all day on regularly scheduled school days regardless of the weather, providing that the building is deemed safe and comfortably heated. The primary consideration in the event of severe weather conditions shall be the health and safety of students. Parents are expected to exercise good judgement and care when deciding whether or not to send their child(ren) to school when weather conditions are extreme. The following measures shall be taken to promote safe student transportation during cold and inclement weather conditions.

Guidelines

1. Area conditions shall dictate decision-making.
2. Any of the following factors, or combinations of them, shall serve as guidelines for considering the non-operation or early-operation of buses:
 - 2.1 A temperature of -35 degrees or lower reported by the Weather Office for the area in question;
 - 2.2 Visibility of less than 300 meters; and/or
 - 2.3 Road closures by R.C.M.P., municipal, or other local road officials.

Procedures

1. A check-in process will be utilized during periods of cold or inclement weather to monitor the completion of each bus's trip and initiate follow-up action if overdue.
2. The Transportation Supervisor shall identify not less than two senior, regular drivers in each geographic area of the Division who agree to act as liaison with other drivers on days when weather conditions are marginal at 6:00 a.m.
3. It is the individual driver's decision whether or not to operate the bus. However, if weather conditions are questionable, and the driver wants another opinion, (s)he shall contact the designated liaison person for that area, or the office of the Transportation Supervisor, no later than 6:30 a.m.
4. Any driver who has made the decision not to run on that day shall contact the Transportation Supervisor's office, no later than 6:30 a.m., and shall make every reasonable effort to contact all parents of students normally transported on that route.

5. Under no circumstances will drivers call radio stations. This will be done after 6:30 a.m. by the Transportation Supervisor's office, who will relay to the radio stations all information on the operation of the Division's buses by phone or fax.
6. The following radio stations are designated to receive information in the area served by Wild Rose School Division:
 - ♦ In the North part of the Division CFCW 790 AM, and CIBW-FM 92.9 FM.
 - ♦ In the South part of the Division BIG 105 FM and CKGY 95.5 FM and BIG WEST 94.5 FM.
7. If the driver encounters impassable roads in either the morning or afternoon run and is not able to complete the run, (s)he should immediately:
 - 7.1 Advise the Transportation Supervisor, who will immediately call the school; and
 - 7.2 Make every effort to notify the parents of the students on his/her route so affected.
8. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor to make decisions with respect to the operation of buses on a Division-wide basis during inclement weather, and to advise the Secretary-Treasurer and/or Superintendent when buses will not run, or students need to be dismissed early to facilitate transport home.
9. All calls for clarification, changes of plan, etc. shall be directed to the office of the Transportation Supervisor, or to the School Division office, NOT the local radio stations.

Shut Down of All or Part of Divisional Schools and/or its Transportation System

If adverse weather conditions prevail, the decision may be taken to close down all or parts of the school system and/or transportation system.

1. School System: Schools will remain open as long as students are present and/or staff is able to get to the school.
2. Transportation System: The shutdown of the transportation system will be made by the Transportation Supervisor in consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designate.
3. Where all or part of the transportation system is closed down, it is the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor's office to notify radio stations as early as possible and where possible, the Principals of schools.
4. When schools are closed, only personnel designated to do so in the Superintendent's office shall relay such information to radio stations.
5. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor to have in place a system for notifying/updating bus drivers regarding school closure, non-operation of school buses, or early operation of school buses.

Early Closure of Schools

1. When buses are sent home early but the school remains operational, the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, may allow a teacher who is likely to experience major difficulty in reaching home, to leave early.
2. In the event of a storm setting in after students have been delivered to the school, if in the driver's opinion (s)he feels that the students should be delivered home as soon as possible, the following steps are to be taken:
 - 2.1 The bus driver will notify the transportation supervisor's office, or the division office,
 - 2.2 The transportation supervisor or designate, acting on the information received from the bus driver(s), will contact the school to seek the Principal's permission to dismiss those students affected,
 - 2.3 The transportation supervisor or designate will authorize affected bus drivers to begin their routes with exceptions for specific students (as determined by the school Principal),
 - 2.4 The transportation supervisor will decide particular methods for delivering students home where bus transfers are normally required,
 - 2.5 The bus driver(s) will notify parents of students on their route of all specifics regarding early bus delivery of students.
 - 2.6 The school shall remain open so that any student whose parents cannot be contacted and who have no alternative place to go, can remain there until the Principal arranges adult supervision.
3. Bus drivers in conjunction with the Transportation Supervisor shall establish a communication plan to reach as many parents/guardians as possible when buses are being sent home early and for ensuring the safety of each student. This may include such things as establishing a "fan out" telephone system, as well as broadcast over local radio. The responsibility of advising radio stations is that of the Transportation Supervisor's office.
4. A copy of the current communication plan shall be filed with the Transportation Supervisor by October 15 of the school year and updated as required. One copy will be left on the bus for reference and relief driver use.

General

Principals shall advise parents of the following through newsletters on a regular basis during the winter months:

- When buses do not run, and parents choose to deliver the child to school, the parent shall also be responsible for ensuring safe transportation home for the student, unless notified otherwise.
- ♦ Necessity of children wearing warm clothing (outer) during cold weather, including appropriate footwear.

- ♦ Necessity of parents using good judgment and care when deciding whether or not to send their child(ren) when weather conditions are extreme or when there is danger of roads being blocked.

Reference: Section 57, School Act
Revised: December 17, 2008