

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS / INCLEMENT WEATHER

Background

Every reasonable effort is to be made to hold school on the days stipulated in the annual school calendar. When the weather poses a significant safety concern for the welfare of students, bus route service may be cancelled and or schools may be closed. The Division supports the decision of parents who choose not to send their children to school, or to ride a school bus, because of safety concerns during severe weather.

Procedures

These procedures apply across Golden Hills. In the case of Strathmore and Carseland Schools, a group of three administrators will be designated annually to coordinate some processes. They will be referenced as the "Coordinating Administrator" or "CA"

1. When severe or inclement weather exists, the bus driver shall make a decision, as outlined in the bus driver's handbook, about whether or not it is safe to transport students. If the bus driver deems it unsafe to operate his bus, the driver shall:
 - 1.1 Notify by 6:30 a.m. the Principal(s) of schools on your route or Coordinating Administrator (CA) and the Supervisor of Transportation.
 - 1.2 Notify the parents of all students on the bus route. Options to accomplish this include school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone calls to parents.
 - 1.3 If all bus drivers who serve a particular school cancel the routes, one driver acting on behalf of all drivers may contact the Principal or CA and Transportation Supervisor.
2. If some or all buses are not running, there are three possible options for school status:
 - Green Level – Due to weather and travel conditions, some busses are not running. School is open and regular classes will be offered**
 - *Yellow Level – Due to severe weather and travel conditions, no busses are running. School is open but regular classes are not being offered. We encourage parents and students to stay home and avoid the risks of travel.**
 - *Red Level – Due to the severe weather and travel conditions the school is closed. Do not send students to school. Due to the severe weather we are unable to ensure the school doors will be unlocked, or any staff will be in the building**
- * Require Superintendent approval.
3. When weather conditions warrant it, a Principal or CA may recommend a Yellow or Red status. Both Yellow and Red status require the approval of the Superintendent.
4. Schools with a Green or Yellow status are expected to remain open with staff in attendance for those students who are able to attend even if a bus route, several routes, or all routes affecting the school, do not run.
5. If school staff are unable to reach the school because of severe, inclement weather resulting in impassable or dangerous road conditions, the staff member will incur no loss of pay. The staff member must notify the Principal. When the Principal is aware of severe weather which may pose a significant danger to staff, he/she may contact staff to advise them of the dangerous conditions and that travel to school is not required.

6. If the Superintendent authorizes the Principal or CA to announce a school status of yellow or red due to severe weather, the inability of most or all buses to serve the students, and the inability of staff to reach the school in reasonably safe traveling conditions, provision shall be made by the Principal to ensure that students who arrive at the school have access to the facility and supervision until alternative arrangements can be made with the parent(s). If more than one school in an area is affected by the severe weather, the Principals in the area may consult with one another regarding the closure of schools within the affected area. One Principal, acting on behalf of the group of Principals, may contact the Superintendent for authorization for yellow status or closure (red status) for the affected schools.
7. In situations where severe weather conditions occur or weather conditions have deteriorated after the students have been transported to school, no school bus shall transport students home until the regular dismissal time.
8. If the conditions are such that it is not safe for the buses to take rural students home, it is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to alert parents to the situation, and where necessary, to arrange for local billeting of students and /or their accommodation at the school. Schools are to obtain emergency contact numbers and alternative emergency contacts and billets for students at the time of registration.
9. In the event of a school plant emergency which may be related or unrelated to weather conditions, a school closure may be announced. This decision must be approved by the Superintendent.
10. Each Principal shall have a communication plan to inform parents, students, and staff in the event of a emergent change in school status or school closure. The communication plan must include provisions for communicating with those who are normally transported by school bus services and those who are not. The communication plan shall communicate the school status or closure with all stakeholders. The use of Social Media, School websites, e-mail and direct contact with parents through phone and text is recommended.
11. Principals are advised to communicate this Administrative Procedure and procedures to parents and other stakeholders in advance of inclement weather or other emergency school closure situation.

Summary Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Bus Driver	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make decision to run their route or not based on the conditions and their judgment of student safety as per the bus driver handbook 2. Contact the Principal(s) of schools on your route or Coordinating Administrator and Transportation Supervisor to inform them if they do not run 3. Contact all parents on their route to inform them if they do not run
Principal or Coordinating Administrator (CA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate with local Bus Drivers 2. Consider information and conditions 3. CA also coordinates communication with local Administrators 4. Communicate with Superintendent to recommend closure, or yellow or red status if warranted
Principal	The Principal is responsible for all stake holder communication within their school community including students, parents and school staff and transportation supervisor in the event of a school status announcement or closure for other reason.

Reference: Section 57, 60, 61, School Act
Employment Standards Act