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January 5, 2017

Parents and guardians:

**Re: Extreme Inclement Weather Update**

Due to forecasts of long-term continuing inclement weather ahead, School District 43 is providing the following update.

The BC Lower Mainland area is experiencing a rare extreme weather event of repetitive snowfalls and sustained freezing temperatures and ice. This is causing challenges for individuals and organizations in clearing snow and ice and in their daily activities at home, work and school. Our school district is not immune from these however the safety and well-being of our students, employees and parents is a priority for SD43.

Our staff have been working diligently on clearing snow and ice from key roadways and sidewalks at our 70 schools and facilities with the latest work conducted on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in preparation for the return to school from winter break. More clearing work is scheduled for the next snowfall forecasted for January 6-8, and others over the coming 2-3 weeks.

The district budget allocated for snow clearing has already been exhausted however we are implementing these additional emergency measures to keep schools safe and operational including:

- Emergency allocations from reserve funds for more staff, contractors, salt and equipment to clear snow and ice during this period of sustained extreme inclement weather.
- Redeploying staff to help clear snow and ice accumulations at schools and other SD43 facilities.
- Bringing in more contractors to clear snow and ice at schools and other SD43 facilities in a more timely manner.
- Some schools are implementing temporary changes to pick-up/drop-off and parking areas to alleviate congestion.
- Proactively communicating with stakeholders on the mornings of new snowfall via website, social media, radio.
- Providing tips and links to helpful information on inclement weather.

To help you minimize challenges presented by this inclement weather, we offer these tips:

- Check the SD43 website, social media channels and radio stations on the mornings of new snowfall for school status updates. If there are no posted updates, then SCHOOLS ARE OPEN AND IN SESSION.
- Use primary roads and main walkways to school as these are usually cleared first.
- Normal student pickup/drop off areas may be challenging to navigate so please use extra caution.
- Allow extra time to get to school whether you are walking, taking transit or driving.
- Consider carpooling where possible to minimize traffic congestion.
- Wear appropriate clothes and footwear and protect exposed skin to prevent heat loss.
- Be aware of surroundings - a snow covered patch of ice or snow-filled pothole may cause an unexpected fall.
- Read more information and tips here: [www.sd43.bc.ca/NewsEvents/Pages/EmergencyInformation.aspx](http://www.sd43.bc.ca/NewsEvents/Pages/EmergencyInformation.aspx)

**Lastly, while the District tries to make the best decision with the information available, the weather does change quickly. Therefore, when schools remain open, decisions to stay at home during challenging weather conditions should be made by each family.**

Thank you for your patience and understanding while SD43 staff and school administrators diligently work to keep our 70 schools accessible and safe.

Sincerely,

Patricia Gartland, Superintendent of Schools