

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS FOR EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

Background

On occasion, it is necessary to temporarily close a school facility when extreme weather conditions might endanger the health and safety of students. The decision to close may also involve a discussion with the Medical Health Office, the police, or transportation personnel. In the case of extreme weather conditions, the Superintendent or designate has authority, on behalf of the Board, to temporarily close a school.

Procedures

1. As a general expectation, parents are to be advised that schools are open. If parents believe the local conditions are unsafe, they may keep their child at home or arrange for early dismissal. If schools are to be closed before morning classes begin, an announcement will be made by 6:30 a.m. on the school district website and school websites. Announcements will be made on local radio stations by 6:30 a.m., if possible. During the full day closure, all district organized transportation of students will be cancelled. Wherever possible, the decision will be announced the previous day to enable parents more time to make alternate arrangements for their children.
2. When schools are closed for extreme weather conditions, they are closed for students. If the closure is communicated prior to school opening, schools are also closed for school staff except for staff members listed on the School Extreme Weather Closure Plan. A decision will be made by 1:30pm to determine if the school remains closed for the entire day which would include rentals and evening programs.
3. If school is in session when the closure is announced, staff members are expected to stay and assist with the dismissal of students. Unless the situation is unsafe for staff (as determined by the principal in consultation with the assistant superintendent) they would be expected to work the remainder of the school day.
4. Administrators are expected to complete and have on file a "School Extreme Weather Closure Plan" (Form F-132-1). If a school were to be closed for extreme weather conditions, this plan outlines procedures to ensure the safety of any students that may arrive at school. This plan also provides for communicating with the district office and maintenance regarding school circumstances (attendance information, school conditions, and immediate needs). This plan also lists the core group of staff that includes the principal, to fulfill these functions.
5. The cancellation of a bus run does not mean that schools are closed. When a bus runs early in the afternoon, the safety of elementary students must be ensured.
6. During school electrical, water or heating failures, early student dismissal will be based on the prognosis obtained by the Principal on:
 - 6.1 heating/temperature conditions
 - 6.2 light availability in washroom and work areas
 - 6.3 recovery time estimated by BC Hydro, Fortis BC or Manager of Maintenance

- 6.4 student age
- 6.5 general safety factors

- 7. Authorization for early dismissal shall be obtained from the Superintendent or designate.
- 8. Prior to releasing elementary students, contact must be made with the home or alternate designated by the parent/guardian. If alternate arrangements cannot be made when the home is unoccupied, the child shall be dismissed at the normal time.
- 9. The Superintendent or designate will use district email to distribute priority information affecting school operations which has been initiated by the Superintendent to district administration.

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