

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Background

The safety of students and personnel, in and on school property, when school is in session or during school sponsored activities is paramount.

Procedures

1. Emergency School Closure

The Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services has the authority to temporarily close schools in emergent situations where the health and/or safety of students and staff may be endangered.

1.1 Emergency Closure – Emergency closure may be required under the following circumstances:

- 1.1.1 Extreme weather conditions,
- 1.1.2 Power failure,
- 1.1.3 Water and sewer problems,
- 1.1.4 Fire, or
- 1.1.5 Any other situations that may endanger the health and safety of students and staff.

1.2 Early Dismissal and/or Closure

- 1.2.1 Whenever possible, students are to remain at school until normal school closure.
- 1.2.2 If early school closure is required, the decision shall rest with the Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services.
- 1.2.3 If the Principal is unable to contact the Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services to make the decision in a reasonable period of time, the Principal is then authorized to make the decision to enact early closure.
- 1.2.4 If early closure occurs, the Principal must ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed.
- 1.2.5 Bus drivers are to ensure that each child is left in the care of a responsible person when the bus reaches the child's home, or make arrangements for an alternative drop-off.

1.3 Partial System Closure

In some circumstances, especially when inclement weather is involved, it may be necessary to decide to close one (1) or more schools in a particular busing service area. Such a decision shall be made by the Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services, and shall be communicated to all concerned parties as outlined elsewhere in these procedures.

1.4 System Closure

When a decision is made by the Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services to close all the schools in the jurisdiction, that decision shall be communicated to the media and to all other concerned parties as outlined elsewhere in these procedures.

1.5 In all circumstances where there is a school closure, the Principal must ensure that there is a responsible staff member at the school to look after the needs of any students who may not have been aware of the school closure and who arrive at the school.

1.6 When schools are closed, teachers and support staff will not be required to attend school.

2. Inclement Weather or Hazardous Road Conditions

2.1 Individual bus drivers are to determine if road/weather conditions are a threat to the physical safety of students. If there is any concern over road/weather conditions, it is the responsibility of bus drivers to contact the Transportation Supervisor and advise of the situation in the area.

2.2 In the event a driver deems the road conditions unsafe, the driver will not attempt to convey students on his/her route to their designated school, and will inform the Transportation Supervisor, the parents on route, and Principal of the school the students attend.

2.3 The Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services, in consultation with the Transportation Supervisor, may cancel buses either individually or collectively when weather conditions are so inclement or road conditions are so hazardous as to constitute a safety risk to the students being transported.

2.4 Staff are expected to be at their normal place of work, unless inclement weather conditions or hazardous road conditions from their usual place of residence, endanger their physical well-being.

2.4.1 Staff continue to be paid if they are absent from work in such circumstances.

3. Media Communication Timeline

3.1 Decisions to close schools and/or to cancel buses will be made and communicated as early as reasonably possible. Every effort will be made to adhere to the following timeline:

3.1.1 By 6:00 a.m., designated driver representatives will have reported road and weather conditions in their geographic area to the Transportation Supervisor.

3.1.2 By 6:15 a.m., the Assistant Superintendent, Corporate Services will have informed AM1140 / The Eagle 100.9 FM / Sun Country 99.7 FM of a

decision to close schools or to cancel buses in one (1) or more geographic areas or across the Division.

- 3.1.3 The Division will also ensure that communication is up to date on its website and its avenues for social media.

Reference: Relevant Legislation & Guidelines