



AP 132 INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Approved: Sept. 26, 2014

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Due: Sept 30, 2029

Background

The Superintendent, or designate, has the authority and responsibility to make a decision to close school, cancel or suspend bus service, and/or arrange for the early dismissal of students in situations where the health and safety of students, staff and/or visitors is at risk.

Procedures

1. Emergency School Closure

- 1.1. Schools will be closed for students, staff and visitors if conditions are deemed a risk to health and/or safety. Any of the following factors, or combinations of them, shall serve as guides for considering school closure or early dismissal of students:
 - 1.1.1. Loss of power and heat;
 - 1.1.2. Inadequate water supply and/or water that is not potable;
 - 1.1.3. Sewer back-up;
 - 1.1.4. Structural damage to the school building;
 - 1.1.5. Smoke; and/or
 - 1.1.6. Severe weather.
 - 1.1.7. Other emergent situations.
- 1.2. In the event of an emergency, school closure or early dismissal will be at the discretion of the superintendent, or designate, who will communicate with the principal:
 - 1.2.1. The Superintendent will Communicate and/or consult with provincial authorities.
 - 1.2.2. The principal will:
 - 1.2.2.1. Notify school personnel, transportation service providers, and other stakeholders of the decision to close the school and/or arrange for the early dismissal of students. In the event of early dismissal, school buses may be used if deemed safe to do so.
 - 1.2.2.2. In extreme emergency situations, exercise good judgement and decide and act on their own and;
 - 1.2.2.3. Initiate communication fan-outs to ensure proper information is given to parents about school closure.
- 1.3. If a school closure occurs, the principal must ensure that parents/guardians are informed and that a number of staff, as determined by the principal, are on site to address the possibility that students may be in the facility, despite the closure.

- 1.4. Such closures will be announced on the school website, social media platforms, local radio stations, and by email. It is the parents' responsibility to watch and/or listen for these announcements and to make suitable arrangements for their children.

2. Severe weather cancellation:

- 2.1. At the commencement of the term, the principal shall communicate, in writing, the following information to parents:
 - 2.1.1. The current procedures on emergency cancellation or closing and severe weather;
 - 2.1.2. Advice to the parents that their children are to be dressed warmly in severe weather;
 - 2.1.3. Advice to the parents that they make alternate arrangements for accommodating their children in the event school is closed, classes are cancelled or dismissed early when parents are away.
- 2.2. The following factors shall serve as an indicator that severe weather conditions exist:
 - 2.2.1. Cold exterior temperature below minus 20 degrees including wind-chill;
 - 2.2.2. Exterior heat in excess of 32 degrees and/or a humidex of 40.
 - 2.2.3. Air quality restrictions (smoke) as based on the following table**:

AQHI		Response
1-3	Low Health Risk	Continue school operations as normal
4-6	Moderate Health Risk	Consider restricting levels of activity. Reduce intensity and duration of strenuous activity (i.e. outdoor Phys Ed). Provide resting periods. Consider indoor recess for students with health issues.
7-10	High Health Risk	Reduce or reschedule outdoor activities. Consider indoor recess for all students.
Above 10	Severe Health Risk	Avoid all outdoor activities.

***During periods of air quality restriction, the Interior air quality in different areas of the school may vary, based on classroom ventilation and the HVAC infrastructure. School restrictions/closures owing to interior air quality will be at the superintendent's discretion.*

- 2.2.4. Notification of severe weather through Alberta Emergency Alert. This includes severe wind, excessive precipitation, and/or other weather extremes.
- 2.3. If any of the above weather conditions manifest, restricting student activity to the interior of the school is at the discretion of the principal. Further decisions to close the school are at the discretion of the superintendent.

- 2.4. In addition to the weather conditions as detailed above in section 2.2, restrictions of outdoor activity due to extreme weather conditions are at the discretion of the principal. School closures due to extreme weather conditions are fully at the discretion of the superintendent.
- 2.5. Safe transportation evaluation:
 - 2.5.1. After carefully evaluating the weather, the Superintendent shall determine the extent to which transportation services are limited or cancelled or, in extreme cases, the extent to which schools are closed.
- 2.6. Cancellation of transportation services:
 - 2.6.1. Transportation Services, in consultation with the Superintendent, may cancel bus routes the night before or in the morning due to inclement weather.
 - 2.6.2. Transportation Services shall arrange for the school bus drivers to be notified immediately.
 - 2.6.3. The Principal shall initiate an expedited spread of appropriate information to the schools, families, and regional transportation partners, through electronic mass distribution (i.e. emergency contact services) and appropriate media.
- 2.7. Any school closure must be done in conversation with the Superintendent, the CGCS Board Chair, and the provincial government, under the authority, guidelines, and protocols of Alberta Education.

3. Regarding emergent severe weather with the potential to impact schooling:

- 3.1. Whereas severe inclement weather may cause the cancellation of transportation (at the discretion of the superintendent and/or the transportation provider) with the school remaining open for learning, the weather may become severe enough to require an early dismissal or closure of the school. School closure would only be considered based on weather profiles as outlined above in section 2.2, and should not be confused with the cancellation of transportation.
- 3.2. In the event of emergent severe weather, an early dismissal may be deemed to be necessary in extreme circumstances and approved by the Superintendent or designate:
 - 3.2.1. The Principal shall consult with the Superintendent or designate to determine the location and potential utilization of alternate emergency sites for school personnel and students if required.
 - 3.2.2. The Principal shall ensure that effective planning and appropriate parent contact occurs so that all students are safely delivered to a parent or guardian in a prudent and timely manner.
- 3.3. In the event of emergent, severe weather necessitating the closure of schools:
 - 3.3.1. Transportation services shall be cancelled; and
 - 3.3.2. The school building shall remain open, when possible, so that any students whose parents cannot be contacted and/or who have no alternative place to go, can remain under adult supervision until accommodations can be found.
- 3.4. Staff are required to make a reasonable effort to travel to school if classes are cancelled due to severe weather or impassable road conditions.

- 3.5. If weather and road conditions place the welfare of staff in some jeopardy in reaching their usual place of residence, the principal may authorize a staff member to leave prior to normal school closing time. The principal, or a designate, must ensure appropriate supervision is maintained.
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Reference: Education Act 11, 27, 32, 52, 53, 197, 222
Employment Standards Act