

Administrative Procedure 132 - Severe Weather Conditions

Background

The Division acknowledges the responsibility to establish procedures to govern the operation of buses during severe weather conditions. The Division further recognizes that safety for students and staff is of primary concern; therefore, the responsibility is a joint one between the Division, School Bus Drivers and parents of the students.

Procedures

1. When early morning inclement weather conditions exist:
 - 1.1. The bus driver may decide whether or not they will operate their bus for that day and may consult with the Director of Transportation or Transportation Coordinator subject to the criteria outlined in this procedure.
 - 1.2. The Director of Transportation Services may decide if all buses in an area or the Division shall run and may consult with the Superintendent or the Secretary-Treasurer as appropriate.
 - 1.3. The Director of Transportation Services shall inform the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer when such decisions are made.
2. In making the decision to suspend school bus operation(s), the following weather factors shall be taken into consideration as they relate to school bus safety:
 - 2.1. air temperature and wind speed
 - 2.2. reduced visibility
 - 2.3. freezing rain
 - 2.4. a combination of weather and/or road conditions that make bus operation a significant safety risk.
3. School bus operation(s) shall be suspended when:
 - 3.1. reduced visibility becomes a safety hazard
 - 3.2. air temperature reaches -35 degrees Celsius and/or -40 degrees Celsius with the wind.
4. Information regarding weather conditions may be obtained, after 5:30 a.m., from the following sources:

- 4.1. www.theweathernetwork.com
- 4.2. www.weather.gc.ca
- 4.3. www.511.alberta.ca
5. When a bus driver has made the decision to suspend school bus service, said bus driver shall immediately notify the following:
 - 5.1. The Director of Transportation Services and/or Coordinator
 - 5.2. The parents of the students on their bus
 - 5.3. If requested by the Director or Coordinator, a report by the driver shall be provided by phone first, then in writing explaining the reasons why the service was cancelled. The written notice shall be sent by Email as soon as possible.
6. When a decision is made to operate the buses, the decision to send children on the bus is that of the parents. The parents may consider factors such as the age and health of children, as well as any other factors they deem advisable.
7. All schools shall normally remain open to students, which may be determined otherwise by the Superintendent. All staff members are expected to report to work where it is safe to do so. On scheduled Diploma Examination dates, students who arrive at the school must be allowed to write the examinations.
8. In the event that a bus driver has started her/his route and then determines it is unsafe to continue
 - 8.1. The driver must ensure, if possible, that students are delivered to their home (and that they are able to enter into their home) or the school, whichever is safer in the judgment of the driver.
 - 8.2. In extreme conditions, the driver may also choose to stop the bus and wait until conditions have improved, whichever is safest for the driver and passengers.
 - 8.3. In the case of very young students (Grades 1 and younger), the driver shall ensure that a responsible person is available for supervision. If it is not possible to deliver the student home, the driver shall keep the student on the bus until they are able to deliver the student to a safe place, such as a school.
9. In order to ensure the safety of all concerned schools/principals shall advise the Director of Transportation Services in all instances where a school bus has not arrived at the school at the start of the school day.
10. When bus service is cancelled in the morning, it shall remain that way for that entire day except:

In certain situations, such as morning fog or mechanical issues resolved by noon, as determined by the Transportation Services Director and school bus drivers, bus service may resume after school. Parents will receive notification if the service resumes.

11. After students arrive at school, buses will not depart for an early return home unless authorized by the Director of Transportation Services. During regular dismissal time, principals, in consultation with bus drivers, will assess whether circumstances necessitate accommodating students.
12. All students and staff (which includes the bus driver) are required to be prepared for severe weather conditions. They shall carry with them appropriate winter footwear, and outerwear, including headgear and gloves or mitts.

References: Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 60, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Employment Standards Code
Occupational Health and Safety Act

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