### Administrative Procedure 131

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

### Background:

The Division is responsible for ensuring each of its students is provided with an education program consistent with the requirements of the School Act. Therefore, schools shall remain open to students during the times and dates established in school calendar(s). The Division may temporarily suspend school bus services and close a school building if the health and safety of students and staff are at risk.

### Definitions:

**Regions:**Strathcona Region (excluding the Hamlet of Sherwood Park and the City of Fort Saskatchewan)  
Urban Region – Hamlet of Sherwood Park and City of Fort Saskatchewan  
Lamont Region  
Minburn Region

### Procedures:

1. **Student Transportation**
   1. School bus service may be suspended by the Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Student Transportation when, at 5:00 a.m., Environment Canada reports a temperature of -40 degrees centigrade (-40°C) including wind chill factor, in one or more regions.
   2. School bus service may also be suspended or delayed by the Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Student Transportation, due to adverse weather or road conditions.
   3. The Director of Student Transportation shall take into account information provided by the Alberta Motor Association and/or Environment Canada when making a recommendation to the Superintendent regarding the suspension of school bus service.
   4. Suspension of school bus service may be limited to a specific region of the Division.
   5. Suspension of school bus service may be done on a route-by-route basis.
   6. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Student Transportation, shall make a decision regarding school bus suspension by 5:30 a.m. (or the previous night if conditions make it obvious that service will be suspended the following day).
   7. When school bus service is suspended by the Superintendent, schools shall remain open to students.
   8. If unsafe road conditions occur the Director of Student Transportation, in consultation with the bus operator, has the discretionary power to decide not to operate or to abandon completion of the morning route by returning students to their homes. Student Transportation staff must ensure students have adequate access to residences.
   9. When weather or road conditions deteriorate during the day, the Director of Student Transportation may authorize individual or all buses to leave school prior to regular dismissal time.
   10. Should weather conditions be extreme or deteriorate during the day in a particular region/area, the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, may close the school to all students and staff.
   11. The Principal, staff and school bus operators shall take steps to ensure students arrive home safely when they are dismissed earlier than normal. This includes attempts to contact parents/guardians/emergency contacts to ensure students have adequate access to residences. In remote areas or where parents cannot be contacted, students shall be kept at the school.
   12. Bus operators are to hold themselves in readiness for service in cases of pending extreme conditions.
   13. Parents and school bus operators shall be advised annually of the procedures used for the suspension of school bus service.
   14. Communication
       1. The Director of Student Transportation shall contact all parents, principals, and bus contractors by automated phone message to announce any suspension of bus service.
       2. The Director of Student Transportation shall update the bus status notice on all school websites and the Division website.
       3. The Director of Communication Services shall advise the media of the Superintendent's decision.
       4. The Director of Communication Services shall notify the Subfinder secretary to advise all assigned substitutes of any school closure.
       5. The Director of Communication Services shall compose an appropriate message for the:
          1. central switchboard, Community Hotline (780-417-8122),
          2. Inclement Weather Staff line (780-417-8158),
          3. StaffConnect, and
          4. the Division website.
       6. All such messages shall be posted by 6:30 a.m.
2. **Schools**
   1. Using a weather information source(s) that is the most accurate for the school/community, school staff shall monitor local weather for adverse conditions.
   2. When the temperature including the wind chill factor is -15°C or colder, at the discretion of the Principal the school may choose to:
      1. Make announcements to remind students about appropriate cold weather dress.
      2. Shorten the length of time students are outdoors, particularly over the lunch hour.
      3. Monitor students as they are getting ready to go outside to ensure that they are wearing appropriate clothing.
      4. Monitor students for signs of frostnip, frostbite, or breathing difficulties.
   3. If the temperature including the wind chill factor is-22°C or colder, students shall remain indoors for recess and/or activities.
   4. The Principal may also restrict outdoor activities at any time weather conditions make it prudent to do so, such as heavy rain, thunderstorms, high winds, or icy conditions.
   5. Students
      1. For the safety of students, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure:
         1. their children are suitably dressed for weather conditions, and
         2. arrangements have been made for alternate shelter for their child if no one is home.
      2. On days when school bus services are suspended due to inclement weather or hazardous road conditions, parents who have brought their children to school shall be responsible for their pick up.
      3. On scheduled diploma examination dates, students who arrive at school late shall be allowed to write the examination.
   6. Staff
      1. Staff members are expected to report to work, even if bus service is suspended.
      2. In the event that road and/or weather conditions are extreme, the Superintendent may authorize that staff members are not to report to work. For safety purposes, the Principal shall ensure some staff members are at the school to temporarily accommodate students who report to school.

#### Reference:

Section 18, 20, 45, 56, 57, 60, 61, 113 School Act

Last updated: February 2017