

## **Administrative Procedure 549**

### **AP 549 - Inclement Weather**

#### **Background:**

The Board is responsible for ensuring that each of its students is provided with an education. Therefore, schools shall remain open to students during the times and dates established by the Board. However, the Board may temporarily suspend school bus services and close a school building if the health and safety of students and staff is endangered or if the weather is severe enough to warrant an unnecessary danger to students.

#### **Procedures:**

- 1) A decision to close a school or cancel a bus route will take into consideration the following weather-related factors:
  - a) The Transportation department will determine the driving conditions by contacting drivers, parents and other pertinent contacts by 6:00 a.m.
  - b) School bus services may be suspended by the Superintendent/designate due to adverse weather or when dangerous road conditions are reported.
  - c) School bus service shall be suspended by the Superintendent/designate when an ambient temperature of  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  or colder is reached.
  - d) When school bus services are suspended by the Superintendent/designate, schools in that busing area may be closed (schools affected will have notices and phone out procedures followed), or if all buses throughout the division are not operating, all schools will be closed. The Superintendent or designate, utilizing a fan-out communication system will notify all principals affected regarding schools closures. When schools are closed teachers, support staff (excluding caretakers) will not be required to attend school. In order to protect the safety of students who arrive at school during inclement weather, the Principal shall ensure that there is a responsible person(s) at the school to look after their needs. This person will contact the parent/guardian/emergency contact to make arrangements for the student to be returned home.
  - e) The Transportation Supervisor will notify the media and all bus drivers regarding school closures. The drivers will inform the parents on their routes that buses are not running and that school will be closed. Schools affected will also communicate that the school is closed utilizing the automated communication system and any social media they have identified. Notices will be posted on the school website.
  - f) The Transportation Supervisor will update the bus status' on the Division website and the Superintendent or designate will ensure that the Division website is updated in a timely manner.
- 2) Suspension of school bus services may be limited to a specific areas. The Superintendent or designate may suspend bus services on a route by route basis. If bus service on a route is suspended, no school bus service will be provided on this route(s) for the day.
- 3) Once students are at school, drivers are encouraged to leave them there until the end of the school day. However, the bus driver may determine the need to make an earlier return run.

The decision to take students home early must be made in consultation with parents, the Principal, and the Transportation Supervisor.

- 4) If unsafe road conditions occur, an individual 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. The bus operator must ensure students have adequate access to residences, and verification of adequate supervision and will notify the Transportation Supervisor of their decision.
- 5) Each Principal must have a contingency plan in place to accommodate students over night, if weather conditions are such that students cannot return home.
- 6) For the safety of students it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that:
  - a) Their children are suitably dressed for coping with weather conditions
  - b) Arrangements have been made for alternate shelter for their child if no one is home.

**Reference:**

*Sections 57, 58, 60 School Act*

*January 2018*