

SEVERE WEATHER AND BUS CANCELLATIONS

Background

Because of the geographic size of Prairie South School Division the Board believes that enabling policy providing local discretion in dealing with weather conditions is both prudent and appropriate.

Schools remain open for staff and students despite inclement weather and will only be closed in the event of a threat to health and/or safety. Parents are welcome to transport their children to school at any time during the regular school day, whether buses are running or not.

Procedures

1. Responsibility of the Transportation Manager

- 1.1 The Transportation Manager, in consultation with the Director of Education, has the authority to cancel school bus service on a Division-wide basis. Inclement weather driving conditions may be a valid reason for non-operation of school buses.
- 1.2 The Transportation Manager or designate will inform the bus drivers, school principal(s), CAC, and post on social media and the Prairie South website when transportation services have been cancelled. The Transportation Manager or designate will direct the bus drivers to contact parents/guardians.
- 1.3 The Transportation Manager or designate shall maintain files for the cancellation of school buses. The Transportation Manager will cancel applicable bus routes when the temperature including wind chill reaches -40°C or lower. For paratransit passengers, bus routes will be cancelled with the temperature including wind chill reaches -35°C or lower.
- 1.4 Buses may be cancelled pending consideration of the following factors:
 - Severely drifted or extremely icy roads.
 - Limited visibility because of fog or blowing snow.
 - Other environmental conditions are typically announced by Environment Canada through its telephone information services, web site or on a local radio station.
 - We collect information from Weather Canada for cancellations and a list of where the weather information is collected from can be found in *Appendix A: Weather Canada Information*.
- 1.5 The decision to cancel morning buses shall be made by 6:00 a.m.
- 1.6 The decision to cancel afternoon buses shall be made no later than 1:00 p.m.
- 1.7 School buses provided for out-of-school curricular and extracurricular activities are also cancelled on days that transportation services are cancelled.

2. Responsibility of Principals

- 2.1 The principal is responsible for ensuring a process for billeting students is in place. The Division will assume any costs incurred.
- 2.2 The principal is to ensure all bus students have a billet.

3. Responsibility of Bus Drivers

- 3.1 Each bus driver in rural areas is responsible for canceling a route in consultation with the Transportation Manager or designate to ensure the safety and well-being of his/her passengers.

If the decision is made before students have been picked up from home in the rural area, the driver is to inform parents or guardians of all passengers that the bus will not operate.
- 3.2 Under no circumstances should buses start on the route at the height of a winter storm.
- 3.3 Under normal circumstances bus drivers shall not commence their routes prior to normal departure time.
- 3.4 If the decision to stop operation is made after students have been picked up, the driver is to arrange to deliver each student to a safe, supervised destination. In the rural area, drivers are to inform parents or guardians directly or indirectly of the location of the students. The driver must also inform the principal and Transportation Manager or designate.

4. Responsibility of Parents or Guardians

- 4.1 Parents or guardians of all bus students are to arrange for appropriate billet information for the individual students and to inform the school of those arrangements.
- 4.2 Parents and guardians always have the right to keep their children at home during severe weather conditions or when in the considered opinion of the parent or guardian, they have concern regarding the safety of their children. They also have the right to drive their children to school if the bus does not run.
- 4.3 Parents or guardians are responsible to ensure that their children are appropriately dressed for weather conditions.

Reference: Highway Traffic Act
Sections 85, 87, 194, 195, 196, 197, Education Act

June 6, 2023