

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Background

The District believes that, schools should remain open during inclement weather; however, it recognizes that weather conditions may result in school closures, early dismissals and/or adjustments in regular bus schedules.

Guidelines

1. The Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer have the authority to suspend school bus service and/or close schools in the District when weather conditions constitute a hazard to the safety of students and staff.
2. Parents and school bus operators shall be advised annually of the procedures used when the suspension of bus services, early dismissal or school closure is necessary. Parents are to be asked to listen to local radio broadcasts and check the District's website at www.gsacrd.ab.ca for up-to-date information regarding the cancellation of bussing.
3. A rural school bus operator shall not operate the school bus if, in his/her opinion, road or climatic conditions are of a nature that would make the operation of the bus hazardous to the safety and well being of the school bus passengers.
4. Parents shall ensure that their children who are passengers on a school bus are properly dressed in accordance with prevailing or potential weather conditions.
5. During inclement weather which forces the cancellation of rural bus operations only, schools will remain open.
6. Staff are expected to be in school on days when schools are closed for students, except when roads are impassable or public transportation facilities are suspended. Staff members are asked to listen to local radio broadcasts for precise information. Special arrangements may be required on days when Alberta Education diploma and achievement tests are scheduled.
7. In extreme weather conditions, the final decision to send a child to school or to the bus rests with the parents even though buses and schools may be operating.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent of schools, or designate, shall direct a District-wide suspension of rural school bus service in every instance where, in his/her opinion, climatic and/or

road conditions constitute a significant hazard to the safety and well being of school bus passengers.

- 1.1 Road conditions on Highway 2, designated as "POOR" by *AMA – Edmonton Region Road Reports* may constitute a significant hazard to the safety and well-being of school bus passengers, and may result in cancellation of service.
2. Rural school bus service shall be suspended on all days which the forecast temperatures in the affected area is equal to or colder than minus forty (-40) degrees Celsius (including wind chill).
 - 2.1 The temperature shall be that forecast by Environment Canada. The visibility shall be less than 1 kilometer, as determined by Environment Canada.
3. A school bus operator shall not operate the school bus at the start of a school day if, in his/her opinion, road or climatic conditions in his/her area of service are of a nature that would make the operation of the school bus unsafe.
 - 3.1 Whenever a school bus operator decides, at the beginning of a school day, that he/she will not operate his school bus, he/she shall immediately notify the director of transportation services, the Principal of each school to which he/she provides service, and the parents of each child on the route of his/her decision.
 - 3.2 Whenever a school bus operator determines that hazardous road or climatic conditions may arise during the course of a school day, he/she shall contact the Secretary-Treasurer or designate and request the release of students who ride on the bus. The school Principal shall release such students when requested by the Secretary-Treasurer/designate. The Principal of the school may call the Secretary-Treasurer/designate and request the bus contractor be contacted to release students due to hazardous conditions.
 - 3.3 A school bus operator may determine during the course of the route that road or climatic conditions make it unsafe to continue on the route. In this circumstance, the school bus operator shall attempt to park the bus in a safe location off the traveled road allowance. He/She shall immediately attempt to establish radio contact with school authorities so that parents can be informed of the circumstances and location of their children.
4. Should a bus breakdown occur in the morning, the bus operator shall contact the Secretary-Treasurer or designate as soon as possible so that the message can be relayed to the schools.
5. Passengers will be required to have on their person, proper outer wear, headgear, mitts and footwear.
6. The Superintendent or designate will contact school administrators informing them of any cancellation.

7. The Principal is responsible for arranging for school staff to be available at the school during school closures to answer the phones and to provide reasonable measures for students to return home safely.
 - 7.1 For those days when roads are impassable or public transportation facilities are suspended or weather conditions constitute a hazard to the safety of staff, the Principal will develop annually a plan that will identify which staff can be present at the school to receive students who arrive at a school to ensure a safe return to their home.
 - 7.2 The Principal will communicate the plan to staff at the first staff meeting of each school year.
8. The supervisor of operations services will be responsible for ensuring that at least one member of the custodial or maintenance staff is available at each school and the District office.
9. The Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for arranging for a staff member to be available at District office to answer phones.
10. The Principal is responsible for informing parents and students about inclement weather procedures.
11. For all students accessing transportation services, the Secretary-Treasurer will advise parents/guardians the status of transportation operations and school closures via one or more of the following methods: automated phone notification system, radio, television, and/or website messaging. In each instance, these announcements will be made the preceding evening or between 6:00 a.m and 7:00 a.m. on the same day that bus services are to be suspended.

Announcements of any cancellations will be broadcast on the following radio and television stations:

- AM Radio Channels: 630, 740, 790, 880, 1260
- FM Radio Channels: 91.7, 92.5, 96.3, 97.3, 100.3, 103.9, 104.9
- Television Stations: Global, CityTV, CTV

It is recommended that two or more broadcasts be heard to ensure accuracy.

12. It shall be communicated to parents that it is very important—they make advance, adequate provisions for their child(ren) in the event that weather or mechanical difficulties may:
 - 12.1 Force suspension of regular bus service.
 - 12.2 Cause early dismissal of students.
 - 12.3 Result in a bus being more than ten (10) minutes late for a scheduled stop.