

TRANSPORTATION - CANCELLATION OF BUS ROUTES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Background

The Division believes that parents/guardians have the first decision as to whether or not to send their student(s) to school on days when weather conditions are a factor. On occasion, it may be unwise to operate bus routes due to the risks involved in transporting students as a result of weather/road conditions.

Procedures

1. Setting and Reviewing the Process

The bus drivers and the School Administrator(s) at each school must, early in each school year, meet to establish a suitable procedure for checking and reporting conditions and reaching a collective decision relative to the wisdom of operating school buses when weather/road conditions would create an unnecessary risk for the safe transport of students.

2. Making the Decision

In the case of extreme weather/unsafe road conditions, the bus drivers are to communicate their assessment of the situation to the School Administrator(s). Bus drivers shall reach a decision as to whether or not their bus route serving a school will be cancelled for that day.

2.1 Temperature

- 2.1.1 Bus Routes will be cancelled when the air temperature reaches -40 degrees Celsius;
- 2.1.2 Bus Routes will be cancelled when the air temperature combined with wind chill reaches -40 degrees Celsius.
- 2.1.3 Air temperature and wind chill will be determined by accessing www.theweathernetwork.com and viewing the information for the town/village in which the school is located. This website displays temperature and wind chill for each area in the Division.
- 2.1.4 The information acquired above shall be obtained just prior to the bus route, not the night before. However, in extreme conditions, the Director of Transportation may make the decision the night before.

2.2 Fog

When considering whether or not a bus route should be cancelled due to fog, the bus driver shall make an effort to contact parents/guardians at various locations on their route to determine the severity of the fog and whether it is widespread or localized. Once a morning route has been cancelled due to fog, and if conditions are not foggy for the afternoon route, bus drivers should make the afternoon run to deliver students home.

2.3 Other Weather Issues

When a morning bus route has been cancelled due to any other weather related issue such as a winter storm or poor road conditions, bus drivers are not expected or required to run their afternoon route. Parents/guardians who have delivered their student(s) to school are expected to pick them up at dismissal.

3. Extra-curricular and Co-curricular

- 3.1 If all buses are canceled, all extra-curricular and co-curricular events will be cancelled.
- 3.2 If some buses are running, the School Administrator(s) in consultation with the destination host and the assigned bus driver, must make the decision, based on student and staff safety, whether or not to participate in the activity.

- 4. Parents/guardians can view route cancellations at www.brsd.ab.ca.

5. Notification - Cancelling All Routes

When a decision has been made by all of the bus drivers in one area to cancel all routes serving a particular school:

- 5.1 The bus drivers will call the Transportation office after hours emergency line for staff/bus drivers (780-781-1899).
- 5.2 The School Administrator(s) will be notified by the Transportation Department.
- 5.3 The Transportation Department will initiate the automatic phone fan-out to parents/guardians and update the website.
- 5.4 In some circumstances, bus drivers will be required to initiate their emergency phone fan-out.

6. Notification - Cancelling an Individual Route

When a bus driver determines it is necessary to cancel all or a portion of their individual bus route, once safe to do so, the bus driver will make every effort to notify the following in order:

- 6.1 School Administrator(s).
- 6.2 Transportation office after-hours emergency line for staff/bus drivers (780-781-1899). (The Transportation Department will update the website, initiate the automatic phone fan-out to parents/guardians and/or request the bus driver to conduct a phone fan-out to parents/guardians).

7. Sending Buses Home Early During the School Day

In the case of the development of extreme weather/unsafe road conditions during the school day, the bus drivers are to communicate their assessment of the situation to the School Administrator(s). The School Administrator(s) and the bus drivers shall reach a decision as to whether or not bused students will be sent home early.

- 7.1 The School Administrator(s) shall notify the Transportation Department of the decision to send buses home early.
- 7.2 The Transportation Department shall notify bus drivers of the School Administrator's decision to send buses home early.
- 7.3 It is the responsibility of the School Administrator(s) to set up a telephone fan-out plan to be implemented during such emergencies.
 - 7.3.1 Students in grade 7 or lower shall not leave the school before a safe place for the student is established and this information is communicated to the parents/emergency contact. If an older sibling has been designated by the parent/guardian as able to care for a younger family member, students in K-7 may be permitted to leave the school.
 - 7.3.2 Students in grade 8 or higher may be released to travel home if the School Administrator(s) is confident that it is safe to do so.
- 7.4 The Transportation Department will update the website that buses are running early.

8. Extreme Conditions

- 8.1 Only in instances of unusually extreme conditions, or in a general system-wide emergency, will the Director of Transportation and Secretary-Treasurer make a decision regarding the cancellation of bus routes affecting a school, some schools, or all schools in the system.
- 8.2 In such cases, the Transportation Department shall:
 - 8.2.1 Initiate the automatic phone fan-out to parents/guardians.
 - 8.2.2 Update the website for parents/guardians to view route cancellations at www.brsd.ab.ca
 - 8.2.3 Contact each affected School Administrator(s) via text message as soon as possible after such a decision is rendered. The School Administrator(s) will respond, indicating that they have received the cancellation notice.

Reference: Section 59 Education Act
Employment Standards Act

Amended: November 2022