

TRANSPORTATION - CANCELLATION OF BUS ROUTES (and other forms of transportation)

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 and other forms of transportation due to the risks involved in transporting students due to 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 Director of Transportation. Bus drivers shall decide 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 where 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 at 6:00 a.m., not the night before. However, in extreme conditions, the Director of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary-Treasurer, 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 are expected to 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. Parents/guardians can view route cancellations at www.brsd.ab.ca.

4. Notification - Cancelling Routes

When a bus driver has made the decision to cancel their route:

- 4.1 The bus driver will call the Transportation office after-hours emergency line for staff/bus drivers (780-781-1899).
- 4.2 The Transportation Department will initiate contacting parents/guardians using SchoolMessenger and update the website and social media. The School Administrator(s) will also be notified by the Transportation Department through SchoolMessenger.
- 4.3 In some circumstances, bus drivers will be required to contact impacted families via phone or text messaging.

5. 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.

- 5.1 The School Administrator(s) shall notify the Transportation Department of the decision to send buses home early.
- 5.2 The Transportation Department shall notify bus drivers of the School Administrator's decision to send buses home early.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the School Administrator(s) to set up a telephone fan-out plan to be implemented during such emergencies.
 - 5.3.1 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.
 - 5.3.2 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.
- 5.4 The Transportation Department will update the website and social media, advising that buses are running early.

6. Extreme Conditions

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 In such cases, the Transportation Department shall:
 - 6.2.1 Use SchoolMessenger to notify parents/guardians.
 - 6.2.2 Update the website and social media for parents/guardians to view route cancellations.
 - 6.2.3 Contact each affected School Administrator(s), via text message using SchoolMessenger, as soon as possible after such a decision is rendered.
- 6.3 The School Administrator(s) shall email the Transportation Department indicating that they have received the cancellation notice.

7. Extra-curricular and Co-curricular

In the event a school has scheduled a co-curricular or extracurricular field trip or an athletic event involving bus transportation, parent volunteers and/or staff member transportation:

- 7.1 To ensure the safety of Division students, staff and volunteers, participation in these activities will be cancelled/postponed if:
 - 7.1.1 The air temperature combined with wind chill reaches -40 degrees Celsius, or
 - 7.1.2 The road conditions reported on 511 Alberta indicate that the roads are in poor condition in the local community, as well as along the route leading to the destination, or the RCMP has issued a travel advisory for the area of travel, or
 - 7.1.3 When in consultation with the driver(s) there are any concerns about safety and ability to traverse the current road/weather conditions.
- 7.2 At any time, the School Administrator(s) can contact the Director of Transportation to discuss any travel concerns.
- 7.3 If some buses for the school are running, the School Administrator(s), in consultation with the coach/supervisor, destination host and the driver(s), and the Director of Transportation/Secretary-Treasurer, must make the decision based on student and staff safety whether or not to participate in the activity.

Reference: Section 59 Education Act
Employment Standards Act