

Administrative Procedure 132

INCLEMENT WEATHER- BUS CANCELLATION/SCHOOL CLOSURE

Background

It is expected that all schools will remain open on those days designated in the District calendars. However, bus service may be temporarily suspended and schools may be closed if the weather is severe enough to warrant an unnecessary danger to students and staff.

Procedures

1. At the commencement of the school year the Superintendent of Schools shall communicate in writing the following information to parents:
 - 1.1 The current procedures on Emergency Closures and Inclement Weather;
 - 1.2 Advice to the parents that their children are to be dressed warmly in severe weather;
 - 1.3 Advice to the parents that they make alternate arrangements for accommodating their children in the event that school is closed or dismissed early when parents are away;
 - 1.4 The criteria to be used by Southland Transportation and other transportation service providers for temporarily suspending service;
 - 1.5 That schools will remain open during inclement weather unless travel within the city of Medicine Hat, is not recommended;
 - 1.6 Parents have the ultimate responsibility in making the final decision on whether a student walks to school during inclement weather;
 - 1.7 If bus service is provided during inclement weather the final decision on whether a student takes the bus or not rests with the parents.
 - 1.8 A letter to Parents and Guardians is attached outlining the Inclement Weather policy of the transportation service provider and the conditions that need to exist for bus cancellation relating to road and weather conditions. The letter will be communicated to the parent community at the start of each school year.
2. The Principal shall establish a fan-out system for contacting parents and staff in the event of, early dismissal due to inclement weather or school closure.

3. In the event of an emergency school closure or early dismissal:
 - 3.1 The Principal will:
 - 3.1.1 Consult with the Superintendent;
 - 3.1.2 Notify school personnel and other appropriate people of the decision to close the school or arrange for the early dismissal of students;
 - 3.1.3 In extreme emergency situations, exercise good judgment and decide and act on his/her own; and
 - 3.1.4 Initiate communication fan-outs to ensure proper information is given regarding school closure.
 - 3.2 The Superintendent will:
 - 3.2.1 Arrange for the Bus Contractor to be notified immediately; and
 - 3.2.2 Initiate communication fan-outs to the school community via the District Website and all Social Media Platforms. In addition, the District will send emergency messaging via the Emergency Messaging App by Email, Text Messaging and Voice-Messaging. Additionally, announcements will be shared with the larger community via traditional media by television and/or radio.
5. In the event of inclement weather causing the cancellation of the transportation services for some students, the following procedures will apply:
 - 5.1 Staff shall be on duty if the school is open;
 - 5.2 Unless otherwise directed by the Principal, teachers shall be responsible for the direct supervision and instruction of their assigned classes for students not affected by the cancellation of transportation services;
 - 5.3 Teachers shall exercise their professional judgment in making the decision to present new material or to undertake supplementary activities when transportation services to the school are cancelled. If new material is presented, teachers shall make provision for students to attain the objectives of the material missed during their absence;
 - 5.4 Principals are to exercise their own judgment in respect of the application of attendance policies in their schools.
6. If weather and road conditions place the welfare of staff in some jeopardy in reaching their usual place of residence, the Principal may authorize a staff member to leave prior to normal school closing time. The Principal must ensure appropriate supervision is maintained.

Reference: Section 57, 60, 61, 113, School Act
Employment Standards Act



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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Reference: Administrative Procedure 132 – Inclement Weather – Bus Cancellation/School Closure

As part of our contract with SOUTHLAND TRANSPORTATION providing school bus service to Medicine Hat Catholic schools, SOUTHLAND is required to outline the road and weather conditions that exist for School Bus Routes to be cancelled.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of those conditions and to make you aware of the processes used to inform parents when school busses will not be running due to inclement weather. SOUTHLAND has informed us that the causes for bus cancellation are safety related issues as a result of heavy overnight snowfall and ice on the roads. Should these conditions exist, SOUTHLAND will assess the situation at **5:30 am**. Bus route service may be cancelled for the day if SOUTHLAND determines that the heavy overnight snowfall and/or the ice on the road are detrimental to safe school bus travel.

Temperature and wind-chill in of themselves are not criteria SOUTHLAND will use for the decision to cancel bus route service for the day. Announcements about bus cancellation are communicated by the SOUTHLAND TRANSPORTATION on local radio stations. The School District is also informed. Notification of the bus route cancellation will be posted on the district website at www.mhcbe.ab.ca and on all social media platforms [@mhcatholic](https://twitter.com/mhcatholic) and in addition, the District will send emergency messages via the Emergency Messaging App by-Email, Text Messaging and Voice-Messaging.

Important Notes:

- Please ensure children are dressed warm and appropriate for inclement weather;
- Please ensure alternate arrangements are in place in the event school busses are not running;
- Parents have the ultimate responsibility in making the decision on whether children walk to school or to the school bus during inclement weather.

School Closure: Schools will remain open during inclement weather unless travel is not recommended. Schools will *only be closed* due to inclement weather when the Medicine Hat Police Service advises no travel on city streets.

- Announcements about school closure will be communicated on local radio stations
- Notification of school closure will be posted on the district website at www.mhcbe.ab.ca and on all social media platforms [@mhcatholic](https://twitter.com/mhcatholic)
- Emergency messaging will be sent via School Messenger by Email, Text Messaging and Voice-Messaging.

As an ongoing reminder, it is important Parents/Guardians **OPT-IN** to **SchoolMessenger** (District Emergency Messaging App) to receive emergency notifications by text message from the school district. To receive text messages, you must opt-in; simply text **"Yes" or "Y" to 724665**.

Should you have any questions, please contact your child's School Principal. Thank you.

Superintendent of Schools
Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

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