



# Emergency School Closures / Bus Cancellations Administrative Procedure 8.23

8.0 Safe Schools

---

**Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 16, 17

**Legal Reference:**

---

**Date Adopted:** January 2004

**Date Amended:** February 2007; October 2015; May 2018; January 2022; January 2024

---

School Closures / Bus Cancellations are emergency responses to:

- severe weather concerns
  - hazardous road conditions
  - the power, heat, water being cut off, etc.
  - an event in the school and / or community that threatens student safety / well- being
  - instructions from RCMP / Fire Department / other
- 
- Emergency procedures should be reviewed with staff and students at the beginning of each school year.
  - If schools have any school specific plans in place for this emergency, they need to be filed with the school's Emergency Response Plan.
  - Principals need to have a designate in place that is familiar with all emergency procedures.
  - Teachers and Principals need to ensure any substitute teachers are aware of school emergency procedures.

**Cancellations made BEFORE start of school day:**

1. Principals do not make decision to close school. This decision is made by the Superintendent or designate.

In case of **urgent, safety – related, school – based emergencies**, Principal is to contact Superintendent. Superintendent will make decision in consultation with principal, and then communicate it to those affected.

School closures may affect one school, or all schools, dependent on the emergency.

2. **Temperature of -40°C or colder, or -45°C or colder with wind chill** factored in, will dictate decision to cancel ALL buses for student safety. When extreme temperatures (ambient temperature of -35°C or colder) continue for a number of days, the Division may cancel bus transportation if the ambient temperature at the Gimli Environment Canada weather station is -37°C or colder.
  - When all buses are cancelled schools are closed for the day. On cold weather days when students are not scheduled to attend, schools will not be closed and staff will report to work.
  - This decision will be made by 6:30am.

- Temperature information will be gathered from Environment Canada, Gimli website and Environment Canada wind chill calculator.
- Students and staff will be notified via phone call out system.
- Division and school websites will also be updated with closure details.
- When schools are closed as a consequence of buses being cancelled, staff are required to work from home as they are able. Caretakers and Maintenance are expected to report to work.

3. **Hazardous road conditions** will be assessed to determine if buses need to be cancelled.

- The Transportation Supervisor will do a road check on days when conditions are adverse to collect information for a decision regarding a potential cancellation.
- The Transportation Supervisor may also gather information from designated employees in various locations in the Division.
- Information on road conditions will be shared with the Superintendent at or before 6:00 am. A decision will be made prior to 6:30 am.
- The decision regarding students and staff will be notified via phone call out system.
- Division and school websites will also be updated with closure details.
- At times, only individual buses need to be cancelled. Schools affected by these cancellations will remain open.
  - In consultation with the Transportation Supervisor, drivers may make a decision regarding cancelling their own route.
  - The Transportation Department will inform schools about individual route cancellations.
  - The Division's route to Selkirk will be cancelled when either Evergreen or Lord Selkirk School Division (LSSD) schools are closed. The communication with families will be done by LSSD.

4. **If school closure decision is due to school – based problem** (water, heat, power, etc.) Principal or Custodian will contact the Building Supervisor. The Building Supervisor will consult with Superintendent and decision will be communicated to those affected (staff, students). In making decision, consideration will be given to the length of time school will be without these services, age of the children at the school, etc.

5. **In regard to staff**, no employee shall suffer a loss in pay as a result of these school closures. If a school remains open but an employee determines that travel to work is unsafe, they may choose to stay home, but with the knowledge that the day will be without pay.

**Cancellations made AFTER start of school day:**

1. Principals do not make decision to cancel transportation for end of day. This decision is made by the Superintendent or designate.

In case of **urgent, safety – related, school – based emergencies**, Principal is to contact Superintendent. Superintendent will make decision in consultation with principal, and then communicate it to those affected.

This decision may affect one school, or all schools, dependent on the emergency.

2. If due to adverse weather arising during the school day, or road conditions becoming extremely hazardous over the course of the day, the Transportation Supervisor will provide information to the Superintendent regarding bus transportation. A decision will ideally be made at least one hour before the end of the school day.

Decision to cancel transportation may involve one bus, several buses, buses in one area of the Division or all buses in the Division.

3. If decision to cancel buses is due to **school – based problem** (water, heat, power, etc.) Principal will contact the Building Supervisor. The Building Supervisor will consult with Superintendent and decision will be communicated to those affected. In making the decision consideration will be given to length of time school will be without these services, duration of time remaining in the school day, age of the children at the school, time of year, etc.
4. If a decision is made to cancel any buses the following will occur:
  - inform students and staff in the school
  - **inform parents of decision via phone call out system;** depending on circumstances, Transportation Department, Superintendent or Principal may initiate this call out
  - update Division and school websites with details
  - call out will be made no later than 3:00 pm in order to give parents an opportunity to make a plan
  - **parents will be asked to pick up their child or to call the school with alternate arrangements**
  - when parents phone in with this information the call will be documented
  - as soon as a decision is made, the secretary may start making personal calls to parents that may have a more difficult time making arrangements regarding their child (example: parents who work in Winnipeg)
  - **High School Students**
    - may text or phone their own parent / guardian
    - once contacted, a staff member needs to talk to parent or see text from parent and document plan
    - if cancellation is due to weather / road conditions, students with private vehicles are advised not to drive home, but may do so with parental permission; this must be confirmed by a phone conversation with a staff member
5. **Dismissal:**
  - students will only be dismissed to parent or per alternate arrangements
  - examples: “Johnny can go home with Jim Smith’s mom.”, “Sally can walk to her grandma’s place.”, “I will pick him up but won’t be there for 1 hour”
  - set up “checkpoint” at school’s main entrance so as each student leaves, it is confirmed that they are leaving with parent or in accordance with parent’s wishes

- if child is not picked up and parents have not contacted school, staff need to contact parents and if no answer, contact alternate contacts listed in registration form to make the necessary arrangements
- staff are not to leave school until all students have been picked up or until instructed by Principal to do so

**POST SCHOOL CLOSURE:**

1. Ensure all are safe and have been accounted for. Inform Principal / office of any concerns.
2. If decision was Division – wide, further communication with staff, students, parents, if needed, will be determined by Superintendent.
3. If decision was school – based, further communication with staff, students, parents, if needed, will be determined by Principal, in consultation with Superintendent.
4. Staff and students are asked not to speak to media / share on social media; any questions are to be directed to the Superintendent.
5. If it was a school – based decision, and dependent on reason, Principal to complete and submit **8.00A: Serious Incident Report**