



Severe Weather Administrative Procedure 8.42

8.0 Safe Schools

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:

Legal Reference:

Date Adopted: May 2018

Date Amended: December 2024

When severe weather in the area threatens, the school needs to take steps to protect students and staff.

- Emergency procedures should be reviewed with staff and students at the beginning of each school year.
- **If schools have any school specific plan 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.

PROCEDURE:

- when severe weather threatens, Environment Canada issues special alerts that notify those in affected areas
- if a severe weather alert occurs BEFORE schools starts for the day, decisions about closing schools, bus cancellations, etc. will be made by the Superintendent and Transportation Department (see ***Procedure 8.23 Emergency School Closures/Bus Cancellations***)
- schools can access weather information from a variety of sources
- alert bulletins are issued through the media, and at www.weather.gc.ca website
- the type of alert depends on the severity and timing of the event:
 - **Special Weather Statements** are the least urgent type of alert and are issued to let people know that conditions are unusual and could cause concern
 - **Advisories** are issued for specific weather events (like blowing snow, fog, freezing drizzle and frost) that are less severe, but could still significantly impact area

- **Severe Weather Watch** alerts you about weather conditions that are favourable for a storm or severe weather warning
- **A Severe Weather Warning** is an urgent message that severe weather is either occurring or will occur. Warnings are usually issued six to 24 hours in advance, although some severe weather (such as thunderstorms and tornadoes) can occur rapidly, with less than a half hours' notice

In the event a severe weather warning is issued:

- bring all persons inside the school; ensure all are accounted for
- stay indoors
- if a **tornado alert** is issued, Principal will announce on PA and ask staff and students to take necessary precautions
- NOTE: if power is out, another means of communicating will need to be used
 - move to the safest interior hallway or classroom on ground floor
 - stay away from outside walls
 - crouch or kneel against the wall; protect head with arms
 - if a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk is nearby, go under it and hold on to it
 - avoid large spaces such as gymnasiums and cafeterias
 - close all windows and blinds
 - stay away from open windows and doors, metal objects, electrical appliances and plumbing until severe weather has passed
- remain in safe areas until given further instructions
- if school needs to be evacuated, see **Procedure 8.21 Evacuation**
- if buses need to be cancelled, see **Procedure 8.23 Emergency School Closures/Bus Cancellations**

POST SEVERE WEATHER INCIDENT:

1. Ensure all are safe and accounted for. Inform Principal/office of any concerns.
2. Report any damage to Caretaker/Principal.
3. As needed, the Principal, in consultation with Superintendent will determine the following:
 - debriefing process that will occur with staff and students (what, when, who, where),
 - the need to access other Division supports for students and/or staff,

- communication with parents/community.
- 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. Staff are to remain available as needed, if requested to do so.
- 6. Principal to complete and submit **8.00 A: Serious Incident Report**.