

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Background

The Superintendent has the authority to temporarily close schools in emergent situations where the health or safety of students and staff may be endangered. The primary consideration in the event of severe weather conditions shall be the health and safety of students. Due to the large geographical area covered by the Division, school closures and bus run cancellations may not always be made on a system-wide basis.

Procedures

1. **Emergency Closing** - Emergency closing may be required under the following circumstances: extreme weather conditions, power failure, water and sewer problems, fire or any other situations that may endanger the health and safety of students and staff. *Administrative Procedure 567: Busing During Inclement Weather* provides further details with regards to school closures necessitated by weather conditions. *Administrative Procedure 312: Emergency Measures* and the Safety Handbook provide additional information on procedures to follow in emergent situations.
2. **Early Dismissal and/or Closing** - Whenever possible, students should remain at school until normal school closing. However, individual bus drivers can decide to make an earlier return run if they feel weather conditions warrant that decision in accordance with Administrative Procedure 567. If early school closing is required, the decision shall rest with the Superintendent. If the Principal is unable to contact the Superintendent to make that decision in a reasonable period of time, the Principal is then authorized to make the decision to enact early closing. If early closing occurs, the Principal must ensure that bus drivers, parents and/or guardians are informed. Bus drivers are to ensure that each child is left in the care of a responsible person when the bus reaches the child's home, or make arrangements for an alternative drop-off in accordance with Administrative Procedure 543 Operational Procedures for School Buses, which outlines billeting of students.
3. **Partial System Closing** - In some circumstances, especially when inclement weather is involved, it may be necessary to close one or more schools in a particular busing service area. Such a decision shall be made by the Superintendent, or designate, and shall be communicated to all concerned parties as outlined in Administrative Procedure 567.
4. **System Closing** - When a decision is made by the Superintendent to close all the schools in the jurisdiction, that decision shall be communicated to the media and to all other concerned parties.
5. In all circumstances where there is a school closing, the Principal must ensure that there is a responsible staff member at the school to look after the needs of any students who may not have been aware of the school closing and who arrive or remain at the school.
6. When schools are closed, teachers and support staff (excluding custodians) will not be required to attend school; however, they should continue working from home.

August 2012

References

Section 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Administrative Procedures 567, 312, 543
LRSD Safety Handbook

Updates: October 2016, September 2018, February 2020, March 2021