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## **POLICY EEAF – PWPSD Buses & School Operation During Inclement Weather**

The Board, staff, parents and students are responsible for the safety of children who are required to travel on school buses.

Given the significant difference in weather, road conditions and maturity of our students, the Board recognizes that parents retain the right to make the final decision about their child's use of the transportation system in accordance with their own unique situation.

### **PURPOSE:**

To support safe transportation for the school community.

### **GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES**

1. It is the responsibility of the parents:
  - a) to access information about bus cancellations and school closures by listening to local radio stations or checking the Peace Wapiti web page [www.pwpsd.ca](http://www.pwpsd.ca).
  - b) to ensure all students riding on school buses from November 1 to March 31 have appropriate winter clothing. In those cases where children are not appropriately attired for winter conditions, the bus driver shall advise the parent or principal and the Director of Transportation.
2. **Bus Cancellations Due to Temperature**
  - a) If the temperature is -40 degrees Celsius (excluding wind chill) or colder; or -45 with wind-chill or colder at 6:30 a.m. at a Key Weather Station Locations, the Superintendent\* will cancel school bus routes in that School Attendance Area. (See Environment Canada [Wind chill hazards chart.](#)) From time-to-time, school bus routes may be cancelled when the temperature is nearing -40 degrees Celsius. Because temperature conditions vary from region to region, the decision to cancel buses is made as close to the local community as possible. Administration will use a variety of resources, including [Weather Network](#) and [Alberta 511](#), throughout the local communities to best determine whether to run buses. Buses may be cancelled the day before due to current and forecasted conditions. <https://www.theweathernetwork.com/cahttps://511.alberta.ca/>
  - b) Bus route cancellation information will be updated on the jurisdiction web page. Bus drivers shall advise the parents of the students affected.
3. **Bus Breakdown**
  - a) In the event of a school bus break down during the morning or afternoon runs, the bus driver will notify one of the PWPSD Transportation offices in either Grande Prairie or Spirit River.

- b) Students waiting to be picked up will be notified by their driver or one of the PWPSD Transportation offices that the bus will be cancelled for the remainder of the morning and that a replacement bus will be dispatched for the afternoon run, as well the bus advisory will be updated to indicate that the bus has been cancelled for the remainder of the run.
- c) For students aboard the disabled bus, the nearest available bus will be dispatched to pick up the students from the disabled bus once the students along that route are picked up.

**4. Bus Route Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather or Road Conditions:**

- a) The Superintendent\* may cancel buses either individually or collectively when weather /road conditions constitute a safety risk to the students being transported.
- b) Bus route cancellation information will be updated on the jurisdiction web page. Bus drivers would advise the parents of the students affected that buses are cancelled.
- c) The individual bus driver, after making a reasonable attempt that morning, is granted discretionary power to cancel or alter his/her route to ensure the safety of students being transported.
- d) Where routes are cancelled or altered at the discretion of the bus driver, it is the responsibility of that bus driver to advise the parents of the students, and the Superintendent\*.
- e) In circumstances of inclement weather, schools will remain open whenever possible even if any or all school buses are not operating. Parents need to be aware that under extreme emergency conditions, the Superintendent may close schools.
- f) Under extreme emergency conditions:
  - i) where students cannot be delivered safely to their destination, the students will remain on the bus until released to responsible adult care.
  - ii) For the afternoon return trip, is, in the opinion of the Director of Transportation, students cannot be safely delivered to their destination, students will remain at the school.

**5. Cancellation of Extra-curricular Trips Due to Weather/Road Conditions:**

- a) To ensure the safety of PWPSD students, staff and volunteers, their participation in an extra-curricular activity is cancelled/postponed if:
  - i) on regular school days, participants must travel through an area (either internal or external to PWPSD) where school buses are cancelled due to weather/road conditions.
  - ii) on non-school days, participants must travel through an area (either internal or external to PWPSD) where Alberta's Official Road Reports

([www.511.alberta.ca](http://www.511.alberta.ca)) indicates an RCMP advisory that travel is not recommended.

- b) If weather/road conditions improve significantly, then school administration may consult with the Director of Transportation to determine if the travel ban can be lifted. The Director of Transportation's decision will be guided by the Alberta's Official Road Reports.
  - c) Schools participating in extra-curricular activities that involve winter travel should develop contingency plans and funds so that during inclement weather, groups could choose to leave a day earlier and/or return a day later.
- 6. Students absent when buses are cancelled will be marked excusably absent and will not suffer any penalties for school attendance award programs.
  - 7. In the event of inclement weather, parents retain the right to make the final decision about their child's use of transportation. Parents are responsible to advise the school and bus shop so that students do not suffer any penalties for school attendance award programs.
- \* Superintendent or designate

## **REFERENCES**

### **Cross References:**

[Policy IE](#) – Student Attendance see 4.a)iii) and 5.c)

Environment Canada: [Wind chill hazards chart](#)

The Weather Network: <https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca>

Alberta 511: <https://511.alberta.ca/#:Alerts>

### **Legal Reference:**

[Education Act](#) Section 53

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