

Administrative Procedures

AP 431 EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE	Date of implementation: Fall 2019 Date of update: December 3, 2024
	Related Administrative Procedures: AP-805 Bus Service Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather AP-906 Utilities Disruption

Purpose: Provide direction for in-school administrators and other staff in the event of the emergency closure of a school. The Director or designate will only close a school in a situation where the health and safety of staff and students are at risk. Schools remain open for staff and students despite inclement weather.

Procedures:

1) Advance Preparations for Emergencies

At school opening, the principal shall provide staff with information about the procedure for emergency school closure.

Each school shall establish an emergency evacuation site (muster point) close to the school.

Early in the school year, the principal will communicate the procedures for emergency school closure to parents/guardians.

It is the parent/caregiver responsibility to provide the school with a contact name(s) and phone number(s) where they can be reached in the event of an emergency school closure.

2) Potential Emergencies that Might Result in Emergency Closure

The Director or designate will close a school for students and staff if conditions are such that their health or safety is at risk.

Situations that may put the health and safety of students and staff at risk may include (but not limited to) the following:

- Loss of power;
- Loss of heat;
- Inadequate water supply;
- Sewer back-up;
- Illness, epidemic;
- Staff shortage;

- Structural damage to the school building; and
- Gas leak, etc.

3) Procedure in the Event of a Possible Emergency School Closure

In the event of a possible emergency closure and an early dismissal, the administrator shall:

- Assess the situation.
- Consult with Learning Superintendent and Director or designate regarding appropriate action.
- Contact the Facilities Department in the case of a facilities issue.
- In extreme emergency situations, exercise her/his professional judgment and take the appropriate action without consultation.

The Director or Designate will:

- Plan collaboratively with Facilities and Transportation for an emergency school closure which would lead to an early dismissal at the school.
- If a closure at one school will impact transportation for other schools in the community, all other schools must be informed.

If the decision of the Director or Designate is to cancel school and dismiss students early, the administrator shall:

- Notify school personnel of the decision.
- Account for all students.
- Notify parents/caregivers.
- If it is not possible to get students home, but conditions are such that they cannot remain in school, students must be billeted or moved to the school's emergency evacuation site or transported to another school.
- Share information about the emergency closure to the larger school community.

If the closure of a school happens during the school day before the regular closing time, transporting students by school bus to their homes at that time will be considered. This decision will be dependent on a number of factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Proximity to the end of the regular school day
- Availability of bus drivers on short notice
- Impact on neighbouring schools due to shared bus routes

- Supervision at home and the age of the students

If a school is closed at some point other than the regular closing time and buses transport students at that time, the school will confirm that bus students have adequate supervision in the home before dropping students off.