

Administrative Procedures

AP 431 EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE	Date of implementation: Fall 2019 Date of update: October 27, 2022
	Related Administrative Procedures & Forms: 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 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. The principal will also initiate the collection of contact information and the billeting instructions from each family. This preparation work will ensure that every student has adequate supervision in the home in the event that the school is closed at some point other than the regular closing time.

It is the parent/guardian 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.

At the commencement of the school year, all parents of students who ride the bus to school shall provide the school with billeting instructions for their children in the event that the school is closed at some point other than the regular closing time and their children cannot be transported home safely.

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 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.
- Ensure that all students are accounted for.
- Ensure that all parents are notified.
- 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.
- Initiate the spread of information about the emergency closure to the larger school community using the most effective means available.

- Ensure there is a cellphone available to guarantee regular communication with Division Office.

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 every bus student has adequate supervision in the home before dropping students off.

Draft message to parents:

Please be advised there is currently no power or water at _____ School.

As a result, classes are cancelled for the remainder of the day. Once we have confirmation from parents, students will be dismissed, and buses will transport students home.

Parents – please confirm with your child’s classroom teacher that you have received this message and can pick up your child from the school or receive your child off the bus.

If you are unable to pick up your child or receive them at home this afternoon, please call XXX-XXX-XXXX as soon as possible.