



## Inclement Weather

### Background:

Safety of students is a primary focus of Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7.

The Division recognizes that it has a joint responsibility with parents to ensure that the safety of students is not jeopardized during periods of inclement weather.

The Division further recognizes that the decision to cancel buses or cancel classes requires careful deliberation and early communication. Except in situations where health and/or safety of staff is an issue schools will not be considered closed.

The Division recognizes that weather and road conditions can differ markedly across the Division.

### Definition:

**Inclement Weather** is defined as snow, blowing snow, winds causing difficulty and/or low visibility, other weather conditions, which would prevent the safe transit of students to or from school.

### Procedure:

Due to hazards while driving in adverse weather and road conditions and/or limited visibility, the following procedure should be followed to ensure the safety of students and drivers.

1. Parents are the first to make a decision on whether or not their child(ren) will be riding the bus in inclement weather.
2. During inclement weather conditions a district wide decision will be made whether buses will be operating by 6:00 a.m.
3. School bus drivers have the option to make an individual decision not to run if the visibility and/or weather or temperature conditions are such that it is unsafe to do so.
4. If weather reports forecast inclement weather PHRD Transportation Services will check road conditions.
5. Recommendation for buses not running
  - Director of Facilities and Transportation or designate will notify the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources/Facilities and Transportation or designate of the recommendation not to run buses
  - Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources/Facilities and Transportation or designate will contact the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer of the recommendation not to run
  - If decision is made to enact closure the emergency school closure/inclement weather protocol will be enacted
6. Director of Facilities and Transportation will proceed to notify the Transportation Coordinator, who will in turn contact Swan Hills, Barrhead and Westlock relay drivers by



group text to both land line and cell phone, who, then, will contact all other drivers as per fan out list.

7. If a bus driver determines not to make their run based on inclement weather, every reasonable effort to notify:
  - the parents of students on the route
  - the School Principal
  - the Director of Facilities and Transportation or designate of the cancellation as soon as possible.
8. **Schools will remain open with staff in attendance unless otherwise authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.**
9. Clothing – All students riding on a school bus during the winter months shall be required to be prepared for unexpected severe weather conditions. The student shall carry with them appropriate winter footwear, outerwear, including headgear, gloves or mitts. Students inadequately prepared for winter conditions will be reported to the parents and the school principal by the driver. Form 7- 101 Transportation Notice.
10. Bus drivers are to hold themselves in readiness for services in cases of pending extreme storm conditions.
11. Once the students are delivered to the school, no buses will pick them up to take them home until the regular dismissal time unless the school principal and the driver together determine that it is in the best interests of safety to allow the driver's bus to leave early. Decisions shall be made on an individual basis in order that individual route circumstances can be accounted for. Weather information should be used to inform such decisions.

When leaving in advance of regular dismissal time, before taking students from the school, the driver and/or school must contact the parent or guardian of each student to make them aware that students will be delivered home early. Contact must also be made with the Director of Facilities and Transportation and/or Transportation Coordinator.

If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the students should be:

- retained at school
- delivered to a neighbouring home (subject to prior authorization) until the parents/guardians are contacted, or where the students may not be delivered to their normal resident, the next best (reasonable) alternative shall be exercised.

12. Should parents wish to make alternative arrangements for transporting students home, they must notify the school principal before the student will be allowed to leave the school.

**Procedures for Bus Pick Up and Drop Off during inclement weather (limited Visibility):**

**1. Highway Pickup**

- ❖ Drivers are not to stop on primary or secondary highways when visibility is less than 300 metres.

**2. Rural Road Pickup**



- ❖ Drivers are not to stop on rural gravel roads of **posted speeds 80 km/h or less** when visibility is less than 100 metres.
- ❖ Drivers should not cross any lanes of traffic, when reduced visibility is such that it can not be done safely.

**3. Other Considerations**

- ❖ Drivers should make alternate route plans and inform parents prior to each start of the school year in the event of inclement weather.

**4. Parent Support**

The parents' assistance is requested in helping to prevent potential accidents by contacting their child's driver and alerting them of any danger that may exist due to adverse weather and road conditions and/or limited visibility at your stop.

**Reference:**

Administrative Procedure 20-11 [Emergency School Closing](#)