



## **Emergency School Closing (Threats, Inclement Weather, Power Failures and Water Shortage)**

**School Principals/Regional Services Administrators shall have procedures in place in the event of emergency school closure.**

### **Early Dismissal: Students**

All students are to remain in school until alternate arrangements have been made.

If students are dismissed early because of emergency conditions, schools shall attempt to contact parents, or the individuals on the student's emergency contact list. The closure will be announced on local radio stations and on the School/Division Web-site where possible.

*Parents (or emergency contacts where parents are unavailable) of primary, elementary and junior high students must be contacted before they are dismissed.*

High School students who walk to school or use their own transportation can be dismissed once the announcement regarding the closure has been made to the local media.

Where it is suspected that no parent is at home or the student's emergency contact is not available, alternate arrangements shall be made.

Younger students cannot be sent home with older siblings unless parental permission is obtained or on file.

### **Early Dismissal: Bussing**

When student transportation is affected by unforeseen early dismissal (i.e. inclement weather, power failure, etc.) staff will enact the appropriate notification procedures.

The Director of Facilities and Transportation or designate will be responsible for organizing the bus arrivals for early dismissals, but please note that this process may take upwards of one (1) hour or more and schools should have plans to keep students in school.

### **Threat to the health, welfare, or safety of students and staff:**

1. Schools shall be closed when conditions pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of students.
2. The decision to close a school(s) rests with the Superintendent or designate who shall consult employees and/or Board members.
3. A School Principal is authorized to vacate and close school premises (in the absence of the Superintendent) in hazardous or life-threatening situations.
4. All schools must have emergency school closure plans in place and these plans are to be reviewed by the Safety Officer.



**Inclement Weather:**

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

If school buses do not operate during inclement weather, schools will remain open, unless otherwise indicated.

When school(s) are closed due to inclement weather, etc., major radio stations shall be notified for broadcast purposes and an announcement shall be posted on the website regarding school closure and bus operations. [www.phrd.ab.ca](http://www.phrd.ab.ca). Please refer to Administrative Procedure 70-101 – Inclement Weather.

In such cases, the School Principal will make arrangements to have someone arrive at the school to allow students in until they can return home safely.

**Employee Attendance - Inclement Weather:**

In the event of school closure due to inclement weather, major radio and television stations shall be notified for broadcast purposes and an announcement shall be posted on the website – [www.phrd.ab.ca](http://www.phrd.ab.ca).

Unless otherwise announced or posted staff shall attend during regular school hours unless excused by the Superintendent, the School Principal, the Supervisor or designate.

**Please note** that staff is to proceed to work/school when the roads are safe for public transit and work start times would depend on road conditions.

**Power and water shortages:**

In the event of power or water interruptions the School Principal or designate will contact the Director of Facilities and Transportation to determine the cause of the interruption and the approximate time of when the power or water will be restored.

Often these shortages are restored within 1½ hours so the school should have a plan to keep students in school for that period of time.

During the interruption, the health and safety of students and staff is a concern. Students and staff in areas without proper lighting should be relocated within the school and washrooms should be supervised.

The Director of Facilities and Transportation will be responsible for calling in buses if an early dismissal is required.



The decision to close a school(s) rests with the Superintendent or designate who may consult employees and/or Board members.

**Reference**

[School Act](#) - Section 57

[AP 70-101 Inclement Weather](#)

Exhibit: Emergency School Closure/Inclement Weather Protocol (Internal distribution only)