

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION:	100 – GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	CODE:	AP 131
PROCEDURE:	EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND/OR BUS TRANSPORTATION		

BACKGROUND

In order to provide a safe and caring school environment that is conducive to effective learning, due consideration must be given to the safety of students and staff with regard to hazardous conditions. Schools must remain open to students during the times and dates established.

On rare occasions emergency situations may arise that may force the closure or evacuation of a Division school or schools. These emergency situations may occur in relation to, but not limited to, inclement weather and other extremes of nature, mechanical failure, acts of vandalism, fire or bomb threats. If such situations arise, the health and safety of students and employees will be of primary importance. The Director/designate, therefore, may temporarily close a school or schools or temporarily suspend school bus service if the health and safety of students and staff are endangered.

PROCEDURES

1. Schools may be closed when emergency conditions in or near the school create an unsafe environment for students and staff.
 - 1.1 In the event that conditions in or near the school create an unsafe environment for students and staff, the Principal or designate shall implement the provision of the school's 'Emergency Response' plan.
 - 1.2 The Principal shall advise the Director/designate of conditions at the school that caused the implementing of the school's "Emergency Response" plan.
 - 1.3 The Director/designate shall, upon being advised by the Principal, of the unsafe conditions at the school decide whether or not to close the school.
 - 1.4 When a decision to close a school has been made, students and staff shall remain away from the school until the condition causing the closure has been improved to allow school operations to continue.
 - 1.5 Each school shall develop procedures that address local issues resulting from the emergency closure of schools, and shall communicate the procedures to parents and guardians of students in the school.
 - 1.6 Each school shall develop an "Emergency Response" plan. This plan shall identify the emergency procedures to be invoked for situations in or near the school that create an unsafe environment for students and staff.

2. Rural school bus service may be suspended due to severe weather or road conditions.
 - 2.1 The Principal or bus driver may cancel bus service where the temperature is equal to, or colder than, -38° C, or where the wind-chill factor is -45° C or colder. Decisions to cancel bus services should be made by 7:00 AM.
 - 2.2 When unsafe road conditions occur on an individual bus route that put student safety at risk, an individual bus driver has the authority to decide that conditions warrant the cancellation of bus service on his/her bus route and to terminate the completion of the morning route by returning students to their homes. The bus driver shall ensure that all students have adequate access to residences and to ensure that the parents of all children are duly notified. The bus operator shall report the decision to the Principal.
 - 2.3 The bus driver will notify the Principal prior to canceling bus services.
 - 2.4 The individual bus drivers will immediately notify route-associated parents of the cancellation of bus services.
 - 2.5 The Director will be notified by the Principal of the decision to cancel bus services.
 - 2.6 Bus cancellations are to be announced on the local radio stations.
 - 2.7 Schools shall remain open during inclement weather, even when conditions prevent buses from operating. Schools will be closed for inclement weather conditions only when the Director/designate has determined that schools are to be closed for safety. Any decision to close schools for inclement weather will be made on a community-by-community basis.
 - 2.8 All staff members shall report for duty to provide programs for students on days when enrollments are reduced due to buses not operating unless a decision has been made pursuant to procedure 3.1 below.
 - 2.9 It is expected that students attending schools when the buses are not operating will receive meaningful instruction.
 - 2.10 Parents who transport their children to school on a day when bus service has been suspended because of inclement weather or hazardous road conditions shall be responsible for the transport of their children at the end of the school day.
 - 2.11 Parents have the option, at all times, to decide not to send their children to school if they think the weather conditions present an unacceptable safety risk to their children.
3. Schools may be closed due to inclement weather when safety becomes a factor.
 - 3.1 When the Director/designate receives information that a state of inclement weather exists in a community or area that compromises student and staff safety if the school remains open he/she will make a decision to either close the schools or to keep them open.
 - 3.2 In the event that a Principal in a community identifies that a state of inclement weather exists that puts student and staff at undue risk if the school is kept open he/she shall contact the Director/designate by 6:00 AM.
 - 3.3 In the event that the Director/designate has made the decision to close schools, all staff members of the affected schools shall not be required to report to work.

- 3.4 When a decision is made by the Director/designate to close all schools, that decision shall be communicated through the local radio stations.
 - 3.5 In the event that the Director/designate has made the decision to close schools the Principal shall ensure that at least one staff member is present at the school as the normal school opening time to ensure that children from families that have not received the school closure message are safely housed until they can be safely returned home.
4. Students may be dismissed early in order to avoid travel in adverse weather conditions.
- 4.1 Once school is opened, every effort will be made to send students home at their normal dismissal time. If there is extreme weather deterioration, a decision may be made to send students home early. After the start of school, the decision to close school will be made jointly by the Principal and the Director or designate. The school will make prior contact with the parents prior to sending home children early from school. In the event that a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the school shall make safe accommodation arrangements for the student.
 - 4.2 In the event that the early dismissal time is reasonably close to the normal dismissal time, the Principal shall make a judgment regarding the necessity to contact parents or guardians. The Principal shall ensure that the safety of all students is protected.

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 108, 109, 175 Education Act

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