

ADMIN PROCEDURES MANUAL
Administrative Procedure 132

EXTREME WEATHER OR OTHER HAZARDS

Background

The safety of students and staff during periods of extreme weather; or when other hazards arise is of paramount importance to the District.

Extreme weather is defined as heavy snowfall and extreme heat events and the most frequent causes of closure due to other hazards may include power failure, breakdown of the heating plant, disruption of water supply and fire or heavy smoke.

The District will:

- Endeavour to keep all schools in the District open and in session on all prescribed school days provided that safety can be ensured for students and staff.
- Assess each occurrence of extreme weather or of a hazardous situation as it occurs and initiate the appropriate actions to provide the safest conditions for students and staff.

Procedures for Extreme Weather – Schools Remain Open

1. All employees (Teachers, support staff, Principals, Vice-Principals, and excluded staff) are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend their place of work. If unable to attend, employees are to contact their immediate supervisor or District Office.
2. Principals shall encourage parents to exercise their prerogative to keep their children at home should the weather or hazardous situation (example: poor air quality due to smoke) be extreme. This message is to be presented in the regular school newsletters or in a specific letter to parents early in the school year and is to be followed up with specific reminders in the late fall in preparation for extreme cold events and in early spring in preparation for extreme heat events.
3. Principals and school staffs will establish a protocol for the safe release of students, should early dismissal be required.
4. Early dismissal decisions will be made by the Principal in consultation with the Superintendent or designate based on student safety on their return trip home.
5. In the event of an early dismissal, and if applicable, school bus operators must be informed by the Manager of Operations and Transportation once informed by site-based school administrators. In the event that school bus operator is unable to accommodate early pick up, refer to procedure # 3 (above).
6. Principals are responsible for ensuring that when children are released early that they are escorted across intersections and crosswalks normally supervised by adult guards.
7. At the discretion of the principal, staff members may be released.
8. Early in the school year, Principals will obtain from parents' alternate locations where their children will be supervised in the event of an unexpected school closure and written directions regarding the release of their children.

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from New Westminster Schools.

Procedures for School Closures due to extreme weather or hazardous situation

1. The Superintendent, or designate, will make the final decision regarding District-wide or site-specific school closure or delay of opening and will be responsible for the announcements impacting student and or staff attendance. In the event of a district or site-specific closure related to extreme heat or poor air quality, coordination and guidance from Fraser Health will assist with any closure decision.
2. Announcements will be made over the District website and via electronic communication (email) early enough in the day to allow parents to have students and staff remain at home, taking all reasonable steps to reach and communicate a decision by 7am.
3. School bus operator(s) will be informed of closures by the Manager of Operations and Transportation.
4. It is the responsibility of Principals, or designate, to use best efforts to arrive at school in time to care for any students who may arrive at school despite closure announcements.
5. Facilities staff, identified by the Director of Facilities and Operations, are expected to assist with snow removal or other weather or hazard related challenges.
6. No other non-facilities staff are required to report to the school on the day of closure, but it is expected that they will work from home, as this is a paid working day.
7. Principals will ensure advance annual notice is given to parents and students regarding our procedures.

Procedures specific to extreme heat-related events

1. Review the Heat Stress Exposure Control Plan for mitigation strategies and ensure familiarity with the heat stress protocols.
2. Principals or site administrators shall update site specific Heat Stress Exposure Control Plans using the District template.
3. Principals or site administrators shall post The Heat Stress Control Plan, symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke to the health and safety board at their sites.
4. Principals or site administrators shall identify room(s) or areas of the school that pose a risk of heat stress and should include considerations within the local Heat Stress Exposure Control Plan on how to mitigate risk.
5. Principals and site administrators shall prepare a cool-down room and emergency supplies, evaluating sufficiency of inventory prior to Spring Break of each year.

References: Section 20, 22, 65, 73, 85, 90 School Act

School Regulation 265/89

Adopted: May 30, 2017

Revised: May 28, 2019; June 9, 2023

***Note: AP 132 - previously called 'Closure of Schools Due to Inclement Weather or Other Hazards'.**

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from New Westminster Schools.