

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER HAZARDS

Background

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

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 inclement 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 School Closures

1. The Superintendent, or designate, will make the final decision regarding school closure.
2. The Superintendent, or designate, will make announcements regarding school closure.
3. The Superintendent, or designate, will contact school-based principals and vice-principals.
4. Announcements will be made over CKNW and CBC radio stations early enough in the day to allow parents to have students remain at home. School bus operators will be informed of closures by the Director of Instruction, Learning Services.
5. It is the responsibility of Principals and Vice Principals to arrive at school in time to care for any students who may arrive at school.
6. Facilities staff, identified by the Director of Facilities and Operations, are expected to assist with snow removal or other weather or hazard related challenges.
7. No other 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.
8. The Superintendent, or designate, will provide a news release to both radio stations and to each school to inform parents, students and staff of the District's plan for the following day.
9. Principals will advise parents of school closure procedures at the beginning of the school year.

Procedures for Inclement Weather – Schools Remain Open

1. Teaching, support staff employees, 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 situation 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.
3. Principals and school staffs will establish a protocol for the safe release of students, should school closure be required.
4. Early dismissal decisions will be made by the Principal in consultation with the Superintendent based on student safety on their return trip home. School bus operators must be informed.
5. Principals are responsible for ensuring that when children are released early that they are escorted across intersections and crosswalks normally supervised by adult guards.
6. At the discretion of the principal, staff members may be released.
7. 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.

*Reference: Section 20, 22, 65, 73, 85, 90 School Act
School Regulation 265/89*

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

Adopted: May 28, 2019

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from SD No. 40 (New Westminster)