



Guidelines for School and/or Bus Cancellation

Due to Inclement Weather

Guidelines for Partial or Complete School Closure

Student safety is the first priority of the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) when making school cancellation decisions. Our schools will be kept open except under extreme circumstances to provide the option of attendance for all, but the decision to attend school during inclement weather conditions is the responsibility of each family.

HRCE staff begins to gather information from various sources starting at 4:30 am. Staff consults with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) staff on road conditions, local weather services, and Stock Transportation. By 5:30 am, staff makes a recommendation to the Regional Executive Director (RED) based on the information gathered. The RED makes the final decision based on this information. If it is safe to have students and staff on the roads and sidewalks, then schools will be open. If not, all or some schools may be closed depending on the weather and road conditions in different areas of the region. If schools are closed for the day teachers assigned to effected schools will work from home.

For full day closures of all or some schools, the decision will be announced as close to 6:00 am as possible. Announcements will be:

- Posted on the HRCE's website (www.hrce.ca);
- Posted on the HRCE's Twitter account (HRCE_NS);
- Recorded on the HRCE's School Cancellation Information Line 902-464-INFO (4636);
- Shared with subscribers to the region's email and text notification system; and
- Communicated to local media outlets.

Guidelines for Early School Closure

If conditions deteriorate throughout the day, the RED may close schools early when weather or road conditions are considered to be a threat to the safety of students and staff.

In the event of early school closure due to deteriorating weather conditions, the Director of School Administration (or designate) will send an e-mail to all principals as close to **11:00 AM** as possible regarding information about an early school closure.

If forecasted inclement weather is imminent later in the day, at **6 a.m.** an announcement could be made to inform parents/ guardians of an early school closure and/or to inform parents/ guardians that a decision will be deferred until no later than **11:00 a.m.** following further examination of developing conditions.

Procedures for Principals:

The principal will follow the procedures in HRCE Policy B.012 (*School and Bus Cancellation*).

The principal will follow the process they have established and communicated to parents/ guardians for the safe dismissal of students during an early school closure.

The principal will keep paper copies of all emergency contact information for each student in case the power fails in the school and PowerSchool cannot be accessed.

The principal will ensure that a parent/guardian/ designate for each student in Grades Primary to 6 is contacted directly before the student is released from school to confirm parent/ guardian direction. Teachers should record whether the student leaves on the bus or who they are released to at dismissal.

The principal will collect written instructions from parents/guardians of grade 7 to 9 students each September indicating where students are to go in the event of an early school closure. The principal of grade 7 to 9 students will ensure that teachers follow the written instructions for early school closure collected from parents/guardians in September.

The principal will plan for the supervision and lunch hour arrangements for all bus students as applicable. Consideration will have to be made for cafeteria services, lunch monitors, and whether students will have access to a lunch while waiting for bus pick up.

The principal or designate will remain at the school for a reasonable length of time after students have been dismissed.

The principal may release staff prior to the end of the normal school day provided all students are appropriately supervised.

Communication of bus run cancellations will be:

- Posted on the HRCE's website (www.hrce.ca);
- Posted on the HRCE's Twitter account (HRCE_NS);
- Recorded on the HRCE's School Cancellation Information Line 902-464-INFO (4636);
- Shared with subscribers to the region's email and text notification system; and
- Communicated to local media outlets.

In the event of an early school closure, school buses will be dispatched to schools **two hours** earlier than their normal regularly scheduled pick-up for the afternoon dismissal.

If the announcement is made at either **6 AM or 11:00 AM**, walking students will be dismissed at the start of their regular lunch time.

The principal will develop a plan of supervision until all students have left the school.

Due to changing weather conditions and early closure procedures some school buses may be delayed.

Each September, the principal will provide communication to parents/guardians about *Early School Closure* procedures.

Guidelines for Cancellation of Bus Runs- Schools Open

On school days when conditions exist that it is not safe to operate buses there may be a decision to cancel busing but keep schools open.

A decision to cancel some or all bus runs will be announced by 6:00 am. The cancelled buses and impacted schools will be identified in the announcement.

Communication of bus run cancellations will be:

- Posted on the HRCE's website (www.hrce.ca);
- Posted on the HRCE's Twitter account (HRCE_NS);
- Recorded on the HRCE's School Cancellation Information Line 902-464-INFO (4636);
- Shared with subscribers to the region's email and text notification system; and
- Communicated to local media outlets.

Guidelines for Delayed Opening of Schools

On school days when conditions exist that it is not safe to open schools at the regularly scheduled time but it is predicted that conditions will improve a **2 hour** delayed opening may be considered. Delayed openings would be considered when severe weather has concluded but snow clearing or other operations require additional time. Delayed opening may also be considered when the physical plant is experiencing an issue (power, water) and additional time is required to prepare the facility for opening.

In the event of a delayed opening the following will apply:

- School opening will be delayed 2 hours
- School bus pick up times will be delayed 2 hours
- Principals should remind parents/ guardians that regular bus pick up times are available at BusPlanner

- Excel child care will be cancelled for the morning only
- Pre-Primary opening will be delayed 2 hours
- Custodial staff will report to work at their regularly scheduled time, unless directed otherwise
- School staff is expected to report to work 20 minutes before the delayed start time
- Student supervision begins 20 minutes before the delayed start time
- Each school may alter class schedules to best address their timetables. This information must be clearly communicated to the school community in September
- Lunch times will not change
- Dismissal time will not change
- When a system-wide delayed opening is announced, professional development scheduled for that day will continue but be delayed by 2 hours from its scheduled start time
- Substitutes/ causals hired to cover staff absences will be paid for the percentage they are hired for that day and will report to work accordingly. Pay will not be reduced for the shortened work day
- Students are to be coded in PowerSchool as Absent or Present on a delayed opening day. If students are unable to get to school due to bus issues they are to be marked as Operational Issue (OI).

Principals are expected to communicate with parents/ guardians regarding *Guidelines for School and/ or Bus Cancellation due to Inclement Weather*.

Principals must provide exact time examples in newsletters or on their websites for school start time, staff arrival, student supervision, and the start of Pre-Primary, if applicable, when there is a delayed opening.

Principals should remind parents/ guardians of the importance of attendance and request that any absences on a delayed opening day get reported to the school through the regular process (i.e. Safe Arrival).