



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Inclement Weather

Student Transportation policies, regulations, administrative procedures, weather zone information and parental/guardian expectations are provided on the Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) website: www.cklass.ca CLASS is equally operated on behalf of the Lambton Kent District and the St. Clair Catholic District School Boards who mutually benefit in the provision of shared services.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Prior to Regular School Hours – Snow, Ice & Freezing Rain:

In situations of inclement weather, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will facilitate a recommendation to the Manager of Transportation Services for those zones regarding whether or not school buses will operate in those zones.

Area Spokespersons, together with Zone Captains and School Bus Operators, will make recommendations regarding whether or not to operate school buses within a designated zone based on factors such as:

1. road conditions
2. contacts with various police services
3. contacts with other Zone Captains
4. the condition of the loading zones at schools
5. local weather reports & forecasts
6. reports from road crews
7. spotters assigned to each zone
8. wind-chill factors

- b. Each Zone Captain will communicate the transportation recommendation for each zone to the Area Spokespersons who will contact the Manager of Transportation Services prior to 6:00 a.m.
- c. The Manager of Transportation Services will compile and coordinate the zone recommendations and formulate a decision regarding whether or not to provide transportation services in each zone. The Manager of Transportation Services will post an update on the student transportation website www.schoolbusinfo.com and communicate with designated media prior to 6:20 a.m. Media announcements will follow an established template format. School Administrators and Board Senior Administration will be promptly informed of any closures directly via email.

The Transportation Analyst will provide backup to the Manager of Transportation Services for this procedure as required.

- d. Buses that have been cancelled in the morning due to inclement weather will not return students in the afternoon. If parents/guardians drive students to school in the morning, they are responsible to pick their children up and take them home in the afternoon.

2. Prior to Regular School Hours – Fog Only:

In situations of inclement weather involving only fog, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will make a recommendation whether or not to declare a Fog Cancellation within a designated zone.
- b. Area Spokespersons, Zone Captains and Transportation Services personnel will follow the procedures detailed in Section 1, parts b and c, to communicate Fog Cancellation recommendations, and resulting decisions.
- c. Buses that have been cancelled in the morning due to fog will operate in the afternoon to return students to their homes.
- d. For fog conditions persisting throughout the day, refer to Section 4.

3. Situations Occurring During Routes:

A driver should use the following procedures in the event he/she is unable to continue with the route:

- a. Drive the bus slowly to the shoulder of the road, or off the traveled portion of the road to a safe location.
- b. When necessary, advise passengers to move to the front and shoulder side of the bus (as many as possible).
- c. Ask for assistance, if necessary, to keep passengers calm and quiet.
- d. Call dispatch to advise them of the location, circumstances, and the last student picked up. Dispatch shall then notify the school(s) and Student Transportation Services of the situation and provide regular updates.
- e. Under no circumstances should students be returned to their homes (morning route). Procedures to return students to their homes should follow the process outlined in Section 4.
- f. When it is safe to proceed, advise dispatch and proceed in accordance to road conditions. Dispatch shall then notify the school(s) and Student Transportation Services.

In the event that the conditions preventing the continuation of the route persist and do not appear to be improving, Dispatch shall notify the Zone Captains who in turn shall consult with the Area Spokesperson:

- g. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will make a recommendation whether or not to declare a mid-route service cancellation within a designated zone.
- h. Area Spokespersons, Zone Captains and Transportation Services personnel will immediately communicate the mid-route Service Cancellation recommendation with the Manager of Transportation Services.

- i. The Manager of Transportation Services (or designate) will submit the recommendation to cancel the remaining service to Senior Administration of the member boards for final approval. The system notification process will begin immediately following approval from Senior Board Administrators.
- j. In the event of a mid-route service cancellation decision, the Boards will inform the Manager of Transportation Services or designate of the decision. Each Board's communication staff shall inform the local media which zones are impacted by the mid-route service cancellation. The information shall then be posted on www.schoolbusinfo.com and communicated to the bus operators.
- k. Senior Board Administration will notify Principals of the decision for a mid-route service cancellation.
- l. School Principals or designates will notify parents/guardians of students at the school of the service cancellation and need to pick up students at the school.
- m. Bus drivers shall bring any students on the bus prior to the service cancellation to their school at the earliest opportunity with the utmost concern for safety and shall keep their dispatch regularly updated of their status / location.

4. Situations Occurring During the School Day:

Early release / afternoon service cancellation shall only be considered as a last resort, or in emergency situations. If inclement weather necessitates the need to consider the early dismissal of students, or the cancellation of bussing, the following procedures will occur:

- a. The School Bus Operators and Zone Captains will consult with the Area Spokesperson with their recommendation for early dismissal or the cancellation of bussing in that zone. Most schools require up to three (3) hours for the completion of their parent/guardian contact system. Therefore; other than in exceptional circumstances; the recommendation from Area Spokespersons for an early release must be submitted to Student Transportation Services by no later than 10:00am. The Manager of Transportation Services will submit the recommendation to the Senior Administrations of the member boards for final approval. The system notification process will begin immediately following approval from Senior Board Administrations.
- b. Senior Board Administrations will notify Principals of the decision for an early release or cancellation.
- c. It is the Principal (or designates) responsibility to notify parents/guardians of the decision. In the event that a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, students shall not be released from school unless alternate arrangements are in place. Secondary students may be released without parent/guardian notification upon notifying the office of their plan.
- d. The Board's communication staff will notify the media and the Manager of Transportation Services will post an update to www.schoolbusinfo.com immediately following confirmation from Senior Board Administrations of the early dismissal / cancellation of bussing arrangements.
- e. If inclement weather necessitates the early dismissal of students, the buses will only make one run home. The buses will not come back at the regular dismissal time or any other time to take any additional students home.

5. Cancellation of Charter Buses:

Charter bus trips shall not occur during periods of time when the conditions have been deemed to not be safe for student transportation. The school bus operator(s) will advise the school Principal when charter buses have been cancelled as a result of unsafe conditions.

6 Communications:

CLASS shall maintain a current library of the policies, regulations, administrative and operational procedures and parent/guardian expectations for Transportation on their student transportation website www.schoolbusinfo.com.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

1. The Director of Education will make the decision whether a school will be closed or not. The Manager of Transportation Services, or the Superintendent of Business or designate will advise the Director of Education when necessary, and as early as possible, of information they are receiving that would indicate a need to consider the closure of one, or more schools. Similarly, school principals will contact the Director of Education, or designate and Area Superintendent, (even during "off" hours) regarding emergency situations that would indicate a need to consider the closure of a school.
2. As well as inclement weather conditions, schools may be closed as a result of failure of the physical plant (heating, electrical, water), or as a result of extreme cold (in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health). Principals will consult with their Area Superintendents, who will consult with the Director of Education. Where a school has been closed, the Principal will communicate a plan with all staff in their building.
3. Designated staff will make a reasonable effort to attend each school for one hour each morning (one-half hour prior to normal beginning to one-half hour after normal beginning) to ensure that no student is inadvertently left unattended when circumstances have resulted in the closure of the school.

SCHOOLS REMAIN OPEN – TRANSPORTATION CANCELLED

In the event of inclement weather where a work site is open, staff who can travel safely will report to their work site. Where staff cannot travel safely to their work site, they will report to the nearest work site within the Lambton Kent District School Board, assuming it is safe to travel to that site. Individuals reporting to an alternate work site are expected to work under the supervision of that site's Principal for the day. Individuals are to inform their Principal when they report to an alternate work site. In the case of fog, employees would report to their work site when conditions improve.

WIND CHILL

Principals should consult the following website addresses for assistance when making decisions about holding outdoor recesses, reducing outdoor recesses and outdoor playtime at lunch, allowing early school entry, or taking other precautionary measures on days which are extremely cold.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weather-health/wind-chill-cold-weather/wind-chill-index.html#toc8> This site calculates the wind chill when temperature and wind are entered.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weather-health/wind-chill-cold-weather/wind-chill-index.html#wc5> This site outlines Health Concerns and provides What To Do suggestions for wind chill temperature ranges.

When the wind chill factor falls below -18, Principals must give consideration to reducing the amount of time students will be exposed. Consideration of other factors before sending children outside include:

- Condition of the playground (ice, snow, etc.)
- Location of the school (perhaps the building or trees block the wind on the playground)
- The age of the students
- The adequacy of student clothing

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEWING THESE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. These administrative procedures will be reviewed annually by Transportation Services personnel, during the Spring term of each school year in preparation for the next school year. Concerns are brought to the attention of the Director of Education and Superintendent of Business.
2. To assist with this review, Transportation Services personnel, with the assistance of each Zone Captain, will log each instance of the cancellation of all, or a portion of, the school bus transportation system during each school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FACILITATE THE OPERATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

1. The Manager of Transportation Services should maintain contact with various media representatives, to facilitate the processing of transportation announcements to the general public.
2. The Superintendent of Business or designate should maintain contact with the various private contractors for the removal of snow to ensure that the clearing of school bus loading areas, parking lots, and access areas is given priority. If contractors have been unable to clear school properties, the Manager of Plant and Maintenance shall inform the Manager of Transportation Services.
3. School bus operators should maintain contact with the various municipal Managers of Public Works to determine whether or not the clearing of snow from roads that provide access to schools has been possible.

Implementation Date: January 12, 2000

Revised: March 20, 2002, January 12, 2005, June 3, 2008, February 3, 2009, January 4, 2011, February 5, 2013, November 3, 2014, November 4, 2019

Reference: LKDSB Policy and Regulations
Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) www.schoolbusinfo.com.