

## Policy E-102: Bus and School Operations During Inclement Weather

### Policy

The responsibility for the safety of children who are required to travel on school buses or other school provided transportation is shared by the board, its staff, parents and students. The safety of students shall not be placed at risk by requiring the operation of school buses during inclement weather.

### Guidelines

- The Superintendent or designate shall direct the suspension of school bus operations on all days on which the temperature is equal to, or colder than  $-40^{\circ}$  Celsius, as determined by key area drivers in consultation with the supervisor.
- The Superintendent or designate may cancel buses either individually or collectively when weather conditions are so inclement or road conditions are so hazardous as to constitute a safety risk to the students being transported. In the absence of a decision by the Superintendent or designate, the individual driver is granted discretionary power to cancel or alter his/her morning or afternoon route on an individual basis to ensure the safety of students being transported.
- Where transportation is cancelled or routes are altered, it is the responsibility of the person making that decision to advise the parents of the students, the Principal of the school and, where a bus driver making a discretionary decision not to operate because of weather or road conditions, the Superintendent or designate.
- When the Superintendent or designate determines that weather or road conditions are such that it is in the interest of the safety of students to cancel or change the normal operation of buses, he/she may do so as appropriate, and shall notify the parties concerned by direct communication and/or by radio announcements on stations listed in Appendix A and by posting on the Valhalla Community School website. Where the decision to cancel or change the normal morning operation of buses is made, that decision shall be made no later than 7 a.m.
- In circumstances of inclement weather, **schools will remain open** to students even if any or all school buses are not operating. When attendance on these days is low, appropriate alternative education experiences will be provided rather than the regular curriculum. These may include enrichment and remediation.
- Students absent when buses are not running will be marked excusable absent and will not suffer any penalties for school attendance award programs.
- If blizzard conditions exist when bus drivers are returning students from school to their home, and circumstances make it impossible to safely deliver the student at their stop, the driver shall keep the student in the vehicle and inform the parents at the first reasonable opportunity to make appropriate arrangements for the safety and well-being of the student.
- Under extreme conditions, the Superintendent may close the school
- All students riding on school buses must wear, which is preferable, or carry with them, proper clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. If a student is not wearing, or does not have in their possession, appropriate clothing suitable for the weather conditions the bus driver shall advise the parent, principal and document the discussion. In a situation that the Principal determines to be of significant risk to the student he/she may decide to keep the student at the school until they have appropriate clothing or the parent picks them up.

Extreme road conditions: If the school bus driver cannot stop due to extremely poor visibility (e.g., fog, blowing snow, freezing rain), the driver may just keep driving, without stopping. Parents must be notified at the first reasonable opportunity (after a safe stop or arrival at the school).