



English Language School Board

tel: (902) 368-6990 Stratford; (902) 888-8400 Summerside

www.gov.pe.ca/edu/elsb

Memorandum

To: School Administrators
From: Dave Gillis, Leader of Corporate Services
Date: November 26, 2013
Re: Inclement Weather Protocol - ELSB

Dear Principals and VPs,

Please find attached our board protocol relating to inclement weather. I've also included a list of some of our more frequently asked questions. Thank you all for your efforts in establishing a common process throughout our system.

Please contact John Cummings or me if you have any further questions.

Have a great day!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Gillis". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dave



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Memorandum

Inclement Weather Protocol – ELSB

The English Language School Board will cancel, delay or dismiss school early when road conditions, weather conditions, or building conditions are considered to be a threat to the safety or health of the students and/or staff.

English Language School Board Storm Day Protocol

The ELSB's two Transportation Supervisors, in consultation with the Director and/or Leader of Corporate Services, will monitor weather patterns and road conditions to determine if transportation services can safely be provided for students. This group will be responsible for determining whether schools and the system should operate as per regular schedules, close completely, delay opening, or dismiss early. In making these decisions, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The board will attempt to ensure that all delays or closures are announced on radio and posted to the ELSB website by 7 AM, or sooner if possible. In order to make a more informed decision on cancellation, school openings may be delayed by one (1) hour before making the final decision on whether to cancel or continue with school.
2. Should it be determined that it is unsafe for students and staff to travel to schools, a **"System Wide Shutdown"** will be announced as follows: *"The English Language School Board is under a **System Wide Shutdown** for the day."* During a system wide shutdown, unless specifically called out for an emergency, no ELSB employee is expected to be at work.
3. Weather or temperature may warrant **cancellation of classes** in all or a family of schools. Should it be determined that province wide class cancellations or delays are required, they will be announced as follows: "Classes in the English Language School Board will be **cancelled** for the day" or "Classes in the English Language School Board will operate on a **one hour delay**." Please note: cancellation of classes differs from a system wide shutdown with relation to employee expectations. Support and office personnel are expected to be at work if weather conditions are reasonable to do so.
4. Due to varying weather patterns throughout the province, the above announcements may be modified to accommodate individual families of schools. In the event there are individual family of school closures or delays, examples of announcements are as follows:

“Classes in the Three Oaks, Kensington, Kinkora, and Bluefield families of schools will be cancelled for the day. All other schools in the English Language School Board will operate on a one hour delay.”

“Classes in the Souris and Montague families of schools will be cancelled for the day. All other schools in the English Language School Board will operate as normal.”

5. **Early dismissal** of schools due to inclement weather will only be considered by the Superintendent or designate in extreme circumstances. Should it be determined that early dismissal is required, the decision will be communicated to schools and radio stations as soon as possible, as well as posted on the ELSB website. Due to the emergency nature of such closures, schools will NOT be expected to contact parents individually. As such, all school Principals must have pre-arranged plans for accommodating the early dismissal of elementary and special needs students.

The Principal or designate, admin assistant, and lead custodian will consult on storm conditions to determine if support staff should remain at the school. If the Principal or designate determines that weather conditions in their specific area are severe enough to warrant staff leaving early, or night staff not coming in, staff are not expected to make up the time. If the Principal or designate determines that weather conditions are acceptable for work, and a staff member is still not comfortable in doing so due to the weather conditions, they may leave at their own discretion. Should the decision be made by the employee to leave in this situation, they will be expected to make up the time by working additional hours at another time, using their vacation time, or logging the time as leave without pay.



ELSB FAQ's re Inclement Weather

- **Why do some employee have to come to work on storm days and some do not?**
For Teachers, EA's, Youth Service Workers (YSW's), Workplace Assistants (WA's), Student Attendants (SA's), and School Bus Drivers, direct service to students is the primary purpose of their position. Teachers, EA's, and YSW's have negotiated clauses in their collective agreements which do not require them to be at school on days when classes are cancelled. EA's and YSW's record storm days as "banked hours", credited hours paid but not worked. These hours are used to offset banked hours that have been recorded on Form "F" of their collective agreement. Such clauses do not exist in other CUPE collective agreements. Similarly, the work of our school bus drivers also relates directly to student attendance at school. Should classes be cancelled, this group of employees would obviously not be required to drive.

School and board office based support staff (i.e. custodial and maintenance staff, administrative assistants, board office support staff) have the primary responsibilities of caring for our facilities and operating our business offices. These positions are not dependent upon direct student contact or student attendance. It is this primary difference in duties that leads to different expectations when it comes to attendance on storm days. Should it be determined that class cancellations or delays are required, these employees are expected to work their regular shifts beginning at their regular times when reasonable to do so.

- **What are employee expectations if there is a radio announcement advising a delay?**
From time to time, announcements may be made that board offices will delay opening. Such announcements are intended to address expectations that the general public may have on our ability to field calls at our offices. Such an announcement does not impact employee expectations. Employees who can safely get to work at their regular time are required to do so. It is acknowledged that some conditions may cause individual employees to require additional time to safely get to work. Allowances may be made in such individual situations. However, if it is reasonable that an employee can get to work at their regularly scheduled time, they are expected to do so.
- **Can night custodial staff come in early on days when classes are cancelled?**
If there are no classes in your facility on a regularly scheduled workday, and it is agreeable by school administration, the night cleaning staff may begin their shift earlier in the day. If, for any reason however, a school has a specific requirement for custodial coverage in the evening, folks will be expected to work their regular shift. Should evening staff come in early, they are still expected to work their full 8 hours.
- **Can outside groups use our facilities when classes are cancelled?**
If classes are cancelled at your school, all student related activities and outside group events at your school are to be cancelled as well.

- **Can employees come to work even if there is a system wide shutdown or class cancellations?**

The short answer is “Yes”, however, similar to entering our schools on weekends, employees opting to come to work on days where we are experiencing a system wide shutdown must modify their expectations. With custodial staff not expected to be present, there should be no expectation that doorways (or parking lots) will be cleared of snow, or that walkways are salted. There is also a possibility that the employee will be alone in the building. Working alone policies should be followed in all such instances including advising others of location and expected schedule.

- **What about scheduled meetings or P.D. sessions?**

- If there is a System Wide Shutdown, all meetings and PD sessions are cancelled.
- If classes are cancelled in one or more family of schools, ALL board level meetings/PD sessions are cancelled.
- If school is delayed due to weather related travel conditions for one or more family of schools, ALL board level meetings/PD sessions are cancelled. Meetings may be postponed to a later date at the discretion of the session coordinator.
- **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policy:** If school is delayed or cancelled due to weather related travel conditions for any Board or Family of Schools in the province, meetings scheduled for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be CANCELLED for the day. This policy is automatic and announcements to this effect will NOT be put on radio stations. Meeting will be postponed to a later date.

If uncertain, please CONFIRM before traveling.

If the meeting or workshop you are scheduled to attend is cancelled due to weather or travel conditions but your school is open, you are expected to report to work.

- **If classes are not cancelled, at what temperature do we restrict outdoor activities?**

On days when classes are in session, and the low temperature combined with wind provides a wind chill of -20 or below, school supervisors should not require students to go outside at recess or lunch, or remain outside upon morning arrival.

- **What are the expectations if after school student activities are cancelled?**

Weather conditions may deteriorate during a school day prompting cancellation of after school student activities. Such decisions are made with the primary concern being for student and chaperone related transportation, often to other areas of our Province. An outside group using your facility on such an evening would be considered a local community event. As such, they may proceed with their activity provided staff are still in your building. Should conditions deteriorate to the point where evening custodial staff are heading home, activities at your school are to be cancelled immediately.