

Topic:	Inclement Weather
Effective:	March 2014
Cross Reference:	
Revision Date:	October 2018
Responsibility:	Director of Education

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board recognizes its responsibility for the safety and welfare of students during school hours, and while commuting to/from school via Board provided transportation;

understands that parents share in the responsibility for the safety and welfare of their children;

realizes that occasionally situations of severe inclement weather exist or are predicted during the school day; and

recognizes that the Halton District School Board on certain occasions may have to close schools and/or cancel transportation.

PROCEDURES:

1. The Director or, in the absence of the Director, the Director's designate shall have the authority to determine school closure and/or cancel transportation subject to the advice of the General Manager, Halton Student Transportation Services (HSTS).
2. The decision to close Halton schools and/or cancel transportation shall be made by 6 a.m.
3. The HSTS General Manager shall implement the decision for school closure and/or cancel transportation, including special transportation, and shall be responsible for its communication to designated radio and television stations.
4. Radio/television stations will be informed of the decision to close schools and/or cancel transportation by 6:30 a.m.
5. Supplemental communication regarding transportation cancellations and/or school closures shall be implemented by the Halton District School Board Communications Department, and include messages through the Board's Home Notification system (email), social media, website and switchboard.
6. Students and staff are excused from attendance at any Halton school, education centre or central office designated closed.
7. Designated schools will be closed when transportation is cancelled prior to school opening.
8. Regardless of decisions relating to transportation cancellations, it is a parent/guardian decision to determine whether it is safe for their children to travel to school.
9. Drivers have the authority to curtail, modify or cancel service if road conditions deteriorate after a route is started. Drivers must notify their dispatcher if routes are altered. Operators will endeavour to contact families and the HSTS General Manager if routes are curtailed, modified or altered.

1. Transportation Cancellations Before the Beginning of the School Day

- 1.1 The HSTS General Manager shall determine the viability of bus transportation on inclement weather days.

- 1.2 By 5:45 a.m., the HSTS General Manager will inform the Director of Education of the viability of transportation.

The HSTS General Manager will also report the following information to the Director:

- Local vicinity weather report
- Present weather report as stated by Environment Canada – Toronto
- Anticipated 12 hour weather report as predicted by Environment Canada – Toronto, and modified by local conditions – (i.e., Guelph predictions for Acton weather)
- Road conditions and/or local transit:

- 1.3 The Director of Education will decide on the cancellation of buses throughout the district or in prescribed zones (as outlined on the attached map).

- 1.4 Bus transportation cancelled at 6 a.m. is cancelled for the entire day.

2. Communication of Transportation Cancellations

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the student, staff and parents to reference the Board’s communications methods to determine transportation cancellations / school closures for the day.

By 6:30 a.m., the HSTS General Manager will notify the following radio/television stations of any transportation cancellations:

AM:	CHML 900	CFRB 1010	CKOC 1150	CHWO 740	CJOY 1460
	CFTR 680				
FM:	CHFI 98.1	CING 95.3	CKFM 99.9	K-LITE 102.9	Y108 (107.9)
	CBC 99.1	WAVE 94.7	CIMJ 106		
TV	CHTV Morning Show		CITY-TV	CP 24	

- 2.2 By 6:30 a.m., a Home Notification System message will be initiated by the Halton District School Board supplementing the cancellation(s) message sent to media outlets. Due to the volume of emails, some families may not receive the message until 7:30 a.m. For this reason, the Home Notification System is supplementary to TV, radio, switchboard telephone message and website (www.hdsb.ca) communication. Additionally, a similar message will be sent out to followers via Twitter at #HaltonDSB.

- 2.3 Any delays of Board provided transportation services will be provided via [this link](https://geoquery.haltonbus.ca/Cancellations.aspx?lang=en-CA) (<https://geoquery.haltonbus.ca/Cancellations.aspx?lang=en-CA>) to the Halton Student Transportation System website. Parents must subscribe to this service from the HSTS website (www.haltonbus.ca)

- 2.4 On the day(s) following transportation cancellations or school closures, when the Director of Education is concerned forecasted weather conditions may cause doubt or concern about whether transportation is operating and/or schools are open, confirmation will be communicated via the Board’s website, switchboard and Twitter.

3. School Closures

- 3.1 In rare circumstances, the Director of Education may order schools closed due to extreme weather conditions, presenting hazardous conditions for transportation to/from school by any means.
- 3.2 On such rare occasions when closures are considered, in general, this decision may be made either system wide or by established transportation zones, and include all Halton District School Board workplaces within the designated area.

- 3.3 School closures will be announced by 6:30 a.m.
- 3.4 Communication of school closures will occur in the same manner as transportation cancellations. Primary communication will be through local media as outlined in 2.1, a message on the Halton District School Board website and switchboard. Supplementary communications will be via Home Notification System message and through social media (Twitter), as outlined in 2.2.
- 3.5 Designated rural schools dependent on transportation will be closed when transportation has been cancelled for the day. Those include:
 - Kilbride Public School
 - Brookville Public School
 - Pineview Public School
 - Stewarttown Public School
 - Limehouse Public School
- 3.6 In the event where school(s) closures may be possible or predicted, advance notification may be sent to parents via the Board's Home Notification System. This message will stress that a final decision regarding closure will be made by 6 a.m. on the day of the potential closure, consistent with the Board's procedures.

4. School Activities During Inclement Weather

- 4.1 Field trips (including trips for inter-school athletics) are cancelled for students in schools located within zones where transportation has been cancelled. In extenuating circumstances, special permission may be sought from the Director of Education or designate.
- 4.2 When schools are declared closed due to inclement weather, all programs and activities offered at Board locations will also be cancelled.
- 4.3 If an inclement weather day causes transportation cancellations and/or school closures during secondary school exams, information specific to each secondary school will be posted on the school's website. A summary of secondary school information can be found at [this link](#) to the Halton District School Board website.
- 4.4 The principal is responsible to determine the appropriateness of outdoor activities during inclement weather.
- 4.5 Parents are responsible for considering weather conditions in preparing students for travel to/from school and any outdoor activities.
- 4.6 When the temperature or wind chill reaches -20C (twenty degrees below zero, Celsius), students will be granted immediate entry to school upon arrival, and students will remain indoors during nutrition breaks. When temperature thresholds are in effect, students are required to keep their outdoor coats/jackets with them throughout the instructional day, in case of a need to evacuate the school.

5 Communication of Policy and Procedures

- 5.1 In October, in each school, Principals will review, instruct and clarify with staff the Inclement Weather Procedures with particular attention given to establishing employee expectations, and teacher responsibilities as understood by the Halton District School Board and Principals.
- 5.2 Principals will send home, by October 15th of each school year, an information bulletin to parents informing them of the Board's Inclement Weather Procedures and the communication of school closures during inclement weather. It shall be the Principal's responsibility to inform each parent of the Board's procedures for school closure.

- 5.3 The Board's Administrative Procedure with accompanying zone maps will also be posted on the Board's website.
- 5.4 Principals should include in their communication to parents a reminder of the Halton Student Transportation Services website where they can monitor any potential school bus delays or changes.

6 School Closure During the School Day

***NOTE: This will happen only when the most severe conditions are predicted or occur.
When schools are dismissed early, transportation will be coordinated.***

- 6.1 The decision to close schools during the day will be made by the Director, or in the absence of the Director, the designate, on advice from the HSTS General Manager as required in school closure before the beginning of a school day. The Director will notify the Chair of this decision.
- 6.2 Elementary and secondary principal input to the decision to close is provided through the Superintendents of Education to the HSTS General Manager prior to a decision of school closure occurring.
- 6.3 Once a school opens, schools will not be closed during the school day unless:
- The decision to implement closure is made by 11 a.m.
 - The communication to close schools is completed by 12 noon.
 - Notification of early school closure will be announced by radio prior to 12 noon.
- 6.4 No pupils in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5, or students with special accommodations, will be sent home until parents have been notified and confirm their student's early dismissal.

Parents of Grade 6-Grade 8 pupils may designate their wishes for their sons/daughters dismissal. Parents may designate beforehand in writing that their son/daughter will be allowed to leave the school by bus OR remain at school until picked up.

Any pupils whose parents, or designate, have not been contacted or previously indicated in writing their intent, will be kept inside the school until parental contact is possible.

Pupils must be advised to remain inside the school until they have been picked up.

- 6.5 Ensuring proper supervision, the Principal may use his/her discretion to dismiss employees once closure has been decided and announced. When all pupils are home, or dismissed as pre-planned, or at a location known by their parent, the Principal will designate the school closed and upon informing the Superintendent of Schools, dismiss the remaining employees.