

## **601.5AP – Emergency Student Dismissal and/or School Closure**

### **Purpose**

1. The general policy of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools is that schools will be open for students and staff according to the annual school calendar established by the Ministry of Education.
2. If the health and/or safety of students and/or staff is endangered, the Superintendent is authorized to:
  - 2.1 to close a school(s) temporarily;
  - 2.2 to dismiss students in emergency situations; and,
  - 2.3 to cancel district transportation services.
3. The Superintendent is authorized to reschedule the re-opening of school on the day of closure subject to:
  - 3.1 an improvement in, or elimination of, the conditions for the closures; and,
  - 3.2 sufficient time to schedule services and re-open the school(s).

### **Procedure**

1. Emergency school closure shall be approved only by the Superintendent or designate.
2. Emergency school closure shall be approved and confirmed only on a day-to-day basis.
3. The principal shall report failures of plumbing, heating, ventilation systems or other failures of a nature to be detrimental to the health or safety of students and staff to the Superintendent of Schools or appropriate Assistant Superintendent.
  - 3.1 The Superintendent, in consultation with the principal, will make the decision to close the school, if deemed appropriate.
  - 3.2 The procedures to be followed will be reviewed with the principal.
4. Transportation Services:
  - 4.1 A decision on the non-operation of school buses in the morning for the reason of inclement weather will be made prior to 6:00 A.M.
  - 4.2 The decision as to the non-operation of school buses in inclement weather will be made by the Superintendent in consultation with the Transportation Supervisor;

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- 4.2.1 the Transportation Supervisor will consult with the RCMP, and the Highways Department, wherever possible, prior to making a recommendation to the Superintendent.
  - 4.3 Non-operation of the school buses and closing of the school(s) will be announced on local radio stations prior to 6:45 A.M.
  - 4.4 The Superintendent shall authorize such announcements and also advise other appropriate individuals.
  - 4.5 Non-operation of school buses does not imply closure of schools.
5. Presence of Employees
  - 5.1 Employees are not excused from duties when school buses do not operate or an early dismissal occurs.
  - 5.2 If a school, or district office, is not suitable for the staff to remain, the Principal or person in charge will make alternate arrangements for the staff with the Superintendent.
  - 5.3 If an employee, using his or her discretion, decides not to report for duty during inclement weather, the absence will be considered a discretionary day, or vacation, in accordance with respective collective agreements, and Board Policy.
    - 5.3.1 This section does not apply to those employees performing critical services – e.g., snow removal crews, transportation drivers, maintenance personnel and caretaking staff.
    - 5.3.2 If critical services employee is unable to get to his/her work site, he/she shall notify his/her immediate supervisor so that alternate transportation can be arranged.
6. When the Superintendent has determined that the schools are closed and essentially not accessible, the principal has the responsibility for making arrangements to have an adult, preferably an employee of the board, given the nature of the emergent situation, at the school site to implement school procedures for emergency school closure.
7. Schools, or school offices, closed during the time of an employee's usual hours of work may be re-opened and employees shall be notified no later than 11:00 a.m. of the same day that they will be required to report to work or work a shift if the shift occurs after the reopening and resumption of services.
8. Each school principal will have in place a procedure to evacuate the school and contact parents in the event of an emergency or temporary school closure, and the school principal will circulate the evacuation procedure to parents.
9. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Transportation Supervisor, will make a decision for early dismissal of schools and the early return of school buses.

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- 9.1 The Principal of the school concerned will be consulted when it is a single school.
- 9.2 When the early dismissal is District wide, consultation will be held with the RCMP and the Highways Department, wherever possible.

10. When all district schools are temporarily closed or dismissed early:

- 10.1 School principals will implement school based emergency procedures;
- 10.2 The Transportation Supervisor will implement appropriate procedures with the transportation staff;
- 10.3 The Superintendent will arrange for the media to be contacted and state the reasons for the closure plus expectations re resumption of services;
- 10.4 The Operations Supervisor will implement appropriate procedures with maintenance staff to ensure the safety and security of district buildings.

11. At the next regular Board meeting, the Superintendent shall report on any school(s) closure.

**Legal References:**

**Monitoring Method:** *Board of Education / Superintendent*

**Monitoring Frequency:** *Annual*

**Previous Policy Number:** *A307*

**Adopted:** *1990.03.28*

**Amended:** *1991.11.27; 2025.01.27*