

School Delays/Closures/Early Releases Due to Weather or Emergency Situations

Purpose

This procedure outlines the process by which a determination is made to either delay the start of school or close school due to adverse weather conditions, emergencies or other circumstances that make it unsafe to transport students or operate schools. Additional processes are mentioned in the event school is canceled and children are released early.

Scope

The Superintendent, Transportation Supervisor, principals, staff, neighboring schools, students and families may be impacted by this procedure.

Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Valley School District is committed to providing the safe transportation of its students to and from school while balancing the needs of families and its commitment to the educational process. Recognizing that adverse weather conditions or other circumstances may make safe transportation difficult or impossible, the following procedure will be used to determine whether safe transportation can be provided, and what steps will be taken to inform families of the district's decision to delay or close school.
- 1.2. Prior to seasons of adverse weather conditions, each school in the district shall notify student households of the district's practices and parent responsibilities during inclement weather.
- 1.3. In preparation for and during weather-related and/or other emergencies, the district shall follow either this procedure or Policy 3432-Emergencies and related procedures for training, notification and transportation of staff, students and families, as appropriate to the situation.

2. DETERMINING ROAD CONDITIONS

The Transportation Supervisor is responsible for being aware of changing weather that may impact road conditions. To that end, the Transportation Supervisor shall follow these steps routinely during potentially adverse weather:

- 2.1. The Transportation Supervisor (hereafter "Supervisor") will regularly check the weather forecast during potentially adverse weather conditions.
 - 2.1.1. At a minimum, Supervisor will check the National Weather Service (NWS) website (www.weather.gov/Spokane), and at least one other reliable weather resource throughout the day and each evening.

- 2.2. 2:00 a.m. Should the evening weather forecast present any potential for adverse road conditions, the Supervisor will conduct an outside visual check of the weather on the following school-day early morning.
- 2.3. 3:00 a.m. When either the weather forecast or visual observation indicate the possibility of adverse road conditions, the Supervisor will conduct a second check of the updated NWS forecast and view the Detailed Hazards Map and Travel Forecast.
- 2.4. 3:15 a.m. When either the visual check and/or the updated weather forecast suggest adverse road conditions may exist, the Supervisor will begin a road conditions check by driving a pre-determined route covering the roads most likely to be adversely impacted.
- 2.5. Based upon the weather forecast, visual observation and road conditions check, the Supervisor will make a determination concerning the safe transportation of students and select one of the following:
 - (a) students can be safely transported to school at the regular time
 - (b) emergency routes only should be traveled by buses
 - (c) the start of school should be delayed two hours
 - (d) school should be canceled

3. COMMUNICATION

3.1. Recommendations

- 3.1.1. 5:00 a.m. The Supervisor will contact the Superintendent or designee with a recommendation to transport students at the regular time, on emergency routes only, on a two-hour late start, or to close school for the day.
- 3.1.2. 5:10 a.m. The Superintendent or designee will communicate his/her decision to the Supervisor no later than 5:10 a.m.

3.2. Decisions

- 3.2.1. 5:10 a.m. The Superintendent or designee will contact any other district principals to advise them of the decision.
- 3.2.2. 5:10 a.m. The Supervisor will contact drivers of the modified transportation plan through a pre-determined contact hierarchy.
- 3.2.3. 5:15 a.m. The Superintendent or designee will contact the district's media notification outlet to distribute the decision to the media.
- 3.2.4. 5:30 a.m. The Superintendent or designee will contact the lead school secretary to advise him/her of the decision.
- 3.2.5. 6:00 a.m. The lead school secretary will provide the district's mass communication service with a message to be distributed to all staff, and to the primary contacts of all students that ride Valley School District buses and/or attend Valley School, Paideia High School or Valley Early

Learning Center. The message will also be sent to neighboring school districts whose students are transported by Valley School District buses.

- 3.2.6. Prior to 6:30 a.m. The district's mass communication service will distribute the message.
- 3.2.7. Upon notification by the district's mass communication service, the district's Communications Department will post a message on local Pre-K-12 school websites.
- 3.2.8. The Superintendent or designee and Supervisor will continue to monitor weather and road conditions to determine resumption of the regular transportation schedule.

4. PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL DELAY OR CLOSURE, OR EARLY RELEASE

- 4.1. When adverse weather conditions begin or are expected any time during a school day, the Superintendent or designee will consult with the Transportation Supervisor regarding anticipated road conditions for the return of students that day and/or for school the following day.
- 4.2. After consultation with the Supervisor, the Superintendent or designee will coordinate with neighboring school districts on a plan of action.
- 4.3. When the Superintendent or designee determines that a late start or school closure should occur the following school day, procedures 3.2.1 through 3.2.8 will be implemented at the time the decision is agreed upon.
- 4.4. In addition, when students are still on campus, a P.A. announcement will be made to notify students of the decision to delay or close school the following day.
- 4.5. The district will release students early only if extremely hazardous road conditions are developing that will make regular release time unwise. Coordination will occur with neighboring school districts so that all students relying on Valley School District buses can make their connection to the bus transporting them home. Additional precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of children being transported home early; for example, that a parent or older sibling is home to receive a student under the age of twelve. Parents will be notified via the district's mass communication system shortly after the decision is made.

Supporting Documentation

National Weather Service <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/otx/>

National Weather Service Chat <https://nwschat.weather.gov/>

NWS Spokane Weekly Weather Briefing <http://www.youtube.com/user/nwsspokane>

Document History

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