



**Procedures 5.04**

**Category: Critical Response**

**Emergency School Closure**

**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE**

The safety of students and staff is of paramount importance at CAPE. The CAPE Charter Board has delegated the authority to close the school building where an emergency situation arises and presents a danger to students and staff, or where classroom conditions become intolerable due to mechanical failure, security threats, health risk or because of inclement weather.

**PROCEDURES**

1. The Superintendent (or designate) shall make the decision to close the school as early as possible, especially in case of inclement weather, to provide students, parents and staff as much notice as possible of the emergency school closure. Announcements of the emergency school closure shall be made through local media outlets and via the Emergency Phone Tree.
2. The Superintendent, in consultation with the principal, may close the school or any portion of it, if classroom conditions are intolerable or unsafe due to mechanical failure or other reasons. If a situation arises at CAPE necessitating the closure of a classroom or the entire school, and if the principal is unable to contact the Superintendent to make a decision for closure in a reasonable period of time, the principal is then authorized to make the decision to enact early closure.
3. If school closure occurs during school hours, the principal must ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed. Activate the Emergency Phone Tree. Staff will remain at their normal place of work until each student has been signed out and picked up by a parent or designated individual. Staff may leave the school facility once all students have left.
4. If an early morning school closure occurs, the principal must ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed. Activate the Emergency Phone Tree. The principal will designate one to two individuals each school year to serve as the designate(s) to come to school on closure days to ensure no students are left unattended at school. If school has been closed due to inclement weather conditions, students will not be expected to attend; teachers will not be expected to report for duty with the exception of the designated individual. The school building shall be kept open to provide access to students and staff who are not aware of the emergency school closure until the staff member on site is absolutely sure that no students will be dropped off at school for the rest of the day. If students are dropped off at school for the day, the school

**CAPE-Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence  
Administrative Manual**

**Procedures 5.04**

**Category: Critical Response**

must remain open until regular dismissal time or until parents pick-up whichever comes first.

5. The principal shall arrange with staff to provide supervision for students who arrive at school (when the school has been closed) until until parents pick-up.
6. The Superintendent or designate shall ensure that the Redcliff school bus is advised of the emergency school closure due to inclement weather so that bus runs for the day may be canceled.
7. The Superintendent shall advise the Board Chair of any non-weather related emergency school closure.
8. School administrators will be provided with updated contact information annually; contact information will also be available in the school Critical Response binders.
9. For the safety of CAPE students, the school may be closed or closed early. Such circumstances include:
  - Blizzard conditions or heavy snowfall
  - Unsafe travel/road conditions or road closures
  - Extreme wind chill (approaching -40°C)
  - Interruption of basic services (water, electricity, heat)
  - Emergency situations
  - Act of God (tornado, flooding, etc.)

Environment Canada	<a href="http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-51_metric_e.html">http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-51_metric_e.html</a>
Weather Service	<a href="http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/caab0211">http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/caab0211</a>
AMA Road Reports	<a href="http://511.alberta.ca/ab/en.html">http://511.alberta.ca/ab/en.html</a>

**CAPE-Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence  
Administrative Manual**

**Procedures 5.04**

**Category: Critical Response**

**Guidelines for Dealing with Extreme Temperatures / Weather**

In order to keep staff and students safe, CAPE uses the following guidelines for dealing with extreme weather or temperature conditions.

- **Temperatures warmer than 28°C (Humidex warmer than 30°C)**
  - Students need to acclimatized to hot temperatures over a series of days for increasing periods of time.
  - Select shaded areas for activities when possible. If activities are in the sun, allow students frequent access to shaded areas for short periods of time.
  - Limit the amount of strenuous exercise to 20 minutes between rest periods.
  - Ensure each student is equipped with a full water bottle of cold water at the beginning of the activity. Access to extra water is strongly advised.
  - Avoid direct sunlight for more than 30 minutes at a time.
  - Students must wear sunscreen (recommended SPF of 20 minimum and UVA and UVB protection). This should be requested in a letter home well before the day of the activity. Students should also be educated in the proper use of sunscreen to protect often neglected body parts including the lips, face, neck, shoulders, back, knees, and tops of feet.
  - Encourage students to wear UV blocking sunglasses.
  - Students can use both sunscreen and insect repellents when they are outdoors to protect their health. Follow the instructions on the package for proper applications of each product. Apply the sunscreen first, followed by the insect repellent.
- **Temperatures colder than -20°C (including wind chill)**
  - Students must have flesh covered with appropriate clothing to participate in recess. Indoor recess is at the discretion of the office with consultation of the administration.
  - Outside activities for temperatures lower than -25°C must be limited to 15 minutes or less with students properly covered.
  - Temperatures that exceed -30°C with wind chill will automatically mean that students remain inside for recesses and breaks.

**CAPE-Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence  
Administrative Manual**

**Procedures 5.04**

**Category: Critical Response**

○ **Rainfall / thunderstorms**

- Students will not take part in activities outside when the rainfall is moderate to severe or a thunderstorm is present.
- In the case of a severe thunderstorm warning, caution must be taken to ensure that students have immediate access to shelter at all times in case of storm conditions.

○ **High winds**

- Should there be winds in excess of 30 km/hr, outside activities will be assessed and may be modified at the teacher's discretion.
- In the case of a tornado sighting in the immediate area, the school will assume modified lockdown procedures.

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**References:**

*School Act, Section 18, 20, 45(8)*  
*Policy 5.04 & 9.04*  
*CAPE charter*  
*CAPE Codes of Conduct*

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Adopted: March 14, 2013

Motion: #2013-3-14-15

**TO BE UPDATED ANNUALLY**