



AP 5.03

Category: Facilities

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.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Responsible** - answerable or accountable, as for something within one's power, control, or management.
2. **Timely** - done at a good and suitable time.
3. **Protocol** - a system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.

PROCEDURE

4. The CAPE Charter Board is responsible for decisions that respond to emergencies that require cancellation of the school operation or student transportation. These decisions must be made in a timely and responsible fashion to ensure the safety and security of the students. CAPE school students are transported to and from school by the parents. Therefore, the safety and security of the parents must also be considered when emergency situations arise.
5. The following guidelines must be followed when making emergency school closure decisions.
6. The Superintendent must establish a protocol to be followed for emergency school closure.
 - 6.1 The principal will activate the Emergency Phone Tree;
 - 6.2 The Facility Manager notifies the busses and field trips, if required;
 - 6.3 The administrative assistant notifies all subs, if required;
 - 6.4 The administrative assistant calls the radio stations, television, and social media;
 - 6.5 The administrative assistant will send out e-mails.
7. The Superintendent is responsible for making the final decision about school closure.
8. The Superintendent may close the school or any portion of it, if classroom conditions are intolerable or unsafe.

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9. 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.
10. Reasons for emergency school closure include, but are not limited to:
 - 10.1 blizzard;
 - 10.2 icy road conditions;
 - 10.3 extreme winds;
 - 10.4 road closures;
 - 10.5 floods;
 - 10.6 broken water mains;
 - 10.7 long term power outage;
 - 10.8 Any other natural disaster or public safety event.
11. The Superintendent or designate shall make the decision to close the school as early as possible to provide students, parents and staff as much notice as possible of the emergency school closure.
12. If school closure occurs prior to school hours, a staff member, preferable one that is within easy short walking distance from the school, is to be at the school to supervise any student dropped off by a parent unaware of the emergency closure.
13. If school closure occurs during school hours, the principal must ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed by activating the Emergency Phone Tree.
 - 13.1 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.
 - 13.2 Staff may leave the school facility once all students have left.

Additional information re Weather:

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.

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- 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

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

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.
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- **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.
- **Rainfall / thunderstorms**
 - Students will not take part in activities outside when the rainfall is moderate to severe or a thunderstorm is present.
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- 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.

References:

Education Act

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