



2020/2021

INCLEMENT WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSURE GUIDELINES

Information for Parents and Students



Inclement weather conditions such as freezing rain, significant snowfall or high wind can occur during the fall and winter months. In such conditions, decisions on the opening or closure of school district facilities are made by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with management and supervisory staff who have checked first-hand on the driving conditions, walking/sidewalk conditions, and general condition of buildings and accessibility to sites. *For more details on how this is done, [click here](#).*

While service to students and parents is a priority and schools will be kept open as much as is reasonably possible, student and staff safety is the primary consideration.

In the event of extreme weather conditions, parents are urged to check the **School District website** www.sd33.bc.ca or tune into radio stations **STAR FM (98.3 FM)** or **THE DRIVE (89.5 FM)**, to receive up-to-date information on school closures and information on the buses. Reports will start after 6:00 a.m. and will be repeated often. The information broadcast is directly from the School District. The reports are confirmed and there is no need to call your school, the School District Office or the radio station.

In the event that there is inclement weather but the school remains open, it is the parent's decision, based on their assessment of the relative safety of travel conditions, as to whether or not their children attend school. Students will be marked absent for the day, but such an absence will not affect a perfect attendance record.

A **Transportation Snow Plan** is in place for students who rely on travel by school bus and live in higher elevations such as Chilliwack Mountain, Little Mountain, Majuba Hill, Ryder Lake and some areas of Columbia Valley and the Eastern Hillside. An announcement will be made should travel in these areas become challenging due to slippery road conditions. *(Please note: the greater Promontory area does not have a snow plan).*

All inclement weather announcements will be posted on the District website www.sd33.bc.ca



How are District Sites and Road Conditions Assessed during Inclement Weather?

Beginning at approximately 2:00 a.m., a team of maintenance and transportation staff begin investigating road conditions and conditions at district sites. Unpredictable conditions can be a result of the varying elevations within Chilliwack. For this reason, road assessments take place in the following areas:

Rosedale, Popkum, Little Mountain and Chilliwack Mountain, Columbia Valley (to the U.S. Border), Chilliwack Lake Road (to Allison Pools), Promontory, Ryder Lake (to Look-Out Point), Prest Road, Marble Hill, Yarrow (including Majuba Hill), and Greendale.

District crews provide an estimated time that snow and ice will be cleared from parking lots, sidewalks and busses. The Manager of Transportation also consults with City of Chilliwack Maintenance Staff and the Fraser Valley Regional District (EMIL Anderson). Weather reports and storm warnings are taken into consideration for the day. Other concerns include fallen or low-lying trees, power failures, accidents and traffic flow. Sidewalks that have excessive snow due to snow removal off the streets are also a safety concern, especially along corridors where students would normally walk to school.

Decisions are also made based on weather conditions forecasted for the “whole day”. If weather changes mid-day there is no way for us to bring students home early because in many cases both parents are working, or may not be home.

Once area assessments are complete, the Facilities/Transportation Team meet to compare their observations. A recommendation is then made to the Superintendent of Schools prior to 5:00 a.m.

How do we make a decision to announce a Snow Day?

Once a recommendation is received, the Superintendent of Schools makes a decision based on the information provided; taking into account the safety of students and staff as a primary concern.

A district announcement is immediately placed on the local radio stations, School District website and social media sites. Notification is also sent to staff, District partners, Community/NLC Coordinators, Daycares and Preschools.

Snow Days are announced on a day-by-day basis only. If inclement weather should continue for more than one day, a routine assessment will occur each day with recommendations brought forward prior to an announcement.

Should inclement weather occur over a weekend, Community School/NLC Coordinators and Principals at these sites are updated and notified of any closures so they may plan accordingly should they need to cancel rentals and re-schedule planned events. For this reason, Community School and NLC sites (or sites hosting significant events) are given priority for snow removal on weekends.

Principals should notify Facilities Staff of significant planned events (including weekend events) booked at their site so that snow removal crews can be scheduled accordingly.