

Administrative Procedure 131

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Background

The safety of students and staff during periods of inclement weather or when other hazards arise is of paramount importance to the District.

Schools provide an important public service to the community. Any closure has a significant impact on students, staff and parents. The District will endeavour to keep schools open and in session on all prescribed school days provided that the safety of our students and staff can be ensured. Each occurrence of inclement weather or of a hazardous situation (power outage, disruption of water/sewer services etc.) will be assessed and the appropriate actions taken to provide the safest conditions for students and staff. Students, employees and parents are expected to make personal decisions about their safety in severe weather conditions (for employee leave of absence terms, please refer to the applicable Collective Agreement).

Procedures

1. The Superintendent or designate, is authorized to close a school, delay the opening time of a school, or dismiss a school early where weather or other conditions might endanger the health or safety of students. The decision will be made in consultation with:
 - 1.1 The Director of Facilities and Planning regarding site and road conditions;
 - 1.2 The Director of Finance and Management Services regarding status of school bus operation; and
 - 1.3 Assistant Superintendents and other sources (i.e. metro District Superintendents) as applicable.
2. To the greatest extent possible, appropriate arrangements shall be made for advising parents and ensuring the safety of dismissed students.
3. Trustees shall be advised of significant emergency closings or dismissals as soon as practicable.
4. It is understood that some students travel to school in ways that may not be possible or safe on an extreme weather day. Therefore, no student will be penalized for lack of attendance under such conditions.

5. Emergent Conditions Which Occur During the School Day

- 5.1 The Principal will contact the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent should an emergent condition develop during the school day and the Principal is concerned about the health or safety of students and staff.
- 5.2 With the approval of the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, the Principal may close the school early in the above circumstance.
- 5.3 The Principal is responsible for ensuring students are not released early from the school's supervision unless reasonable and age-appropriate provisions are made for their safe return home.

6. Emergent Conditions Which Develop Overnight

- 6.1 Should emergent conditions develop overnight, the Superintendent or designate may decide to close a school or delay its opening, or close all schools or delay their opening, after consultation with District staff and appropriate authorities.
- 6.2 Staff, students and parents are to assume that schools will be open. Should it become necessary to close schools or delay openings, that decision will be made as early as possible and no later than 7 a.m. on that day.
- 6.3 District-wide school closings or delayed openings will be posted on the District website and social media channels, and an announcement made via the following media outlets:

Radio Stations	TV Stations
C.B.C. AM 690, 88.1FM	CTV B.C.
CKNW AM 980	C.B.C.
News AM 1130	City TV
Fairchild AM 1470	Global B.C.

- 6.4 Once announced, decisions will not be changed except by the Superintendent or designate.
- 6.5 All elementary students and secondary students with designations, who arrive at a closed school without parents/guardians are to be taken into the school as they arrive and are to be supervised until arrangements have been made with parents/guardians for the students' return home. Secondary students and/or students accompanied by parents/guardians are to return home.

7. Communication of School Closure or Delay In Opening

- 7.1 Should the Communications Director be unavailable, the following personnel are the designated back-ups (in order of call-out):
 - 7.1.1 Office Technology Coordinator
 - 7.1.2 Manager of Information Technology Services

- 7.2 In the fall of each year, the Communications Director will contact media outlets to ensure procedures are in place for the notification of valid school closings/delays in opening. Also, if possible, procedures shall be established to ensure that false reports of school closings are caught before they are reported in the media.
- 7.3 Communication with the media (television and radio) regarding emergency school closing, cancellation of buses, delayed openings, cancellation of Continuing Education classes or to advise that schools are open, will be made by the Communications Director.
- 7.4 The Zone Superintendents or designates will initiate the Emergency Phone Fan-out.
 - 7.4.1 The fan out list will be updated in October each year by the Administrative Assistants to the Assistant Superintendents. The list will include both home and cell phone numbers.
- 7.5 The Superintendent or designate will arrange for the notice to be:
 - 7.5.1 Posted on the District website and social media channels;
 - 7.5.2 Issued via e-mail message to management staff and trustees; and
 - 7.5.3 Posted on the district's intranet site
- 7.6 Where the potential for emergency school closing is identified the previous day, the Superintendent or designate will contact the Communications Director who will:
 - 7.6.1 Have a notice posted on the website and social media channels advising:
 - 7.6.1.1 That a decision will be made by approximately 7 a.m. the next morning; and
 - 7.6.1.2 That the decision will be posted on the website and social media channels, and reported by media outlets (radio and television stations)
- 7.7 The Director of Continuing Education will contact the Superintendent or designate for a decision regarding operation of evening/weekend classes. The Director of Continuing Education will contact:
 - 7.7.1 The Communications Director to have a notice posted on the website and social media channels advising of the status of evening/weekend classes, and advise the Receptionist at the District Office;
 - 7.7.2 Principals with evening/weekend classes to advise of the status of evening/weekend classes (in the event of power outages, contact will need to be by means other than e-mail); and
 - 7.7.3 The Manager of Facility Services to confirm or cancel arrangements made for building access and/or custodial services.

7.8 Return to Regular Operations

- 7.8.1 Once the Superintendent or designate lifts the emergency school closing, the Communications Director will remove the notice on the website and post updated messaging on the district's social media channels.

8. Busing

- 8.1 Buses for students with designations will attempt to operate on their normal schedule during extreme weather days.
- 8.2 Significant changes to the regular bus schedule as a result of weather conditions will be reported on the District's website and social media channels.
- 8.3 Should the condition of side streets require a change to the operation of school buses for students with designations or any cancellation of service, media outlets will be notified and affected families will be informed by the bus operator.

9. Expectations of Staff

- 9.1 At a minimum, this administrative procedure will be reviewed by the Principal at the first staff meeting each school year.
- 9.2 Supervisors at District work sites such as the District Office, Delta Manor Education Centre and Maintenance Office will review the procedures at least once per school year by the end of October.
- 9.3 All employees are expected to report for and/or remain at work during a temporary emergency closing unless otherwise instructed.
- 9.4 If the workplace is deemed unsafe or unhealthy, the Superintendent or designate may close the facility and reassign employees to an alternate location.
- 9.5 If the school remains closed the following day, District officials will develop a plan to address the problem.

In the event of a District designated weather-related closure, the following protocols will apply:

Teaching Staff

- a. Teaching staff are not required to report to work and their pay will not be impacted.
- b. Teaching staff will be expected to work remotely.

Support Staff

- a. Support staff, with the exception of those noted as Essential Services staff (see below) are not required to report to work and their pay will not be impacted.
- b. Support staff not required to report to work are expected to work remotely if possible.

Principals and Vice-Principals

- a. As members of the management team, principals and vice-principals are expected to attempt to report to work in order to provide supervision at their school sites should students arrive and require supervision.
- b. Principals and vice-principals must notify their direct supervisor when they arrive at their school site or if they are not able to report to their school site.
- c. Principals and vice-principals may be asked to report to alternate school sites should the need arise.

Exempt Staff

- a. As members of the management team, exempt staff are expected to attempt to report to work.
- b. Exempt staff must notify their direct supervisor when they have arrived at their site or if they are not able to report to their work site.
- c. Exempt staff may be asked to report to an alternate work site should the need arise.

Essential Services Staff

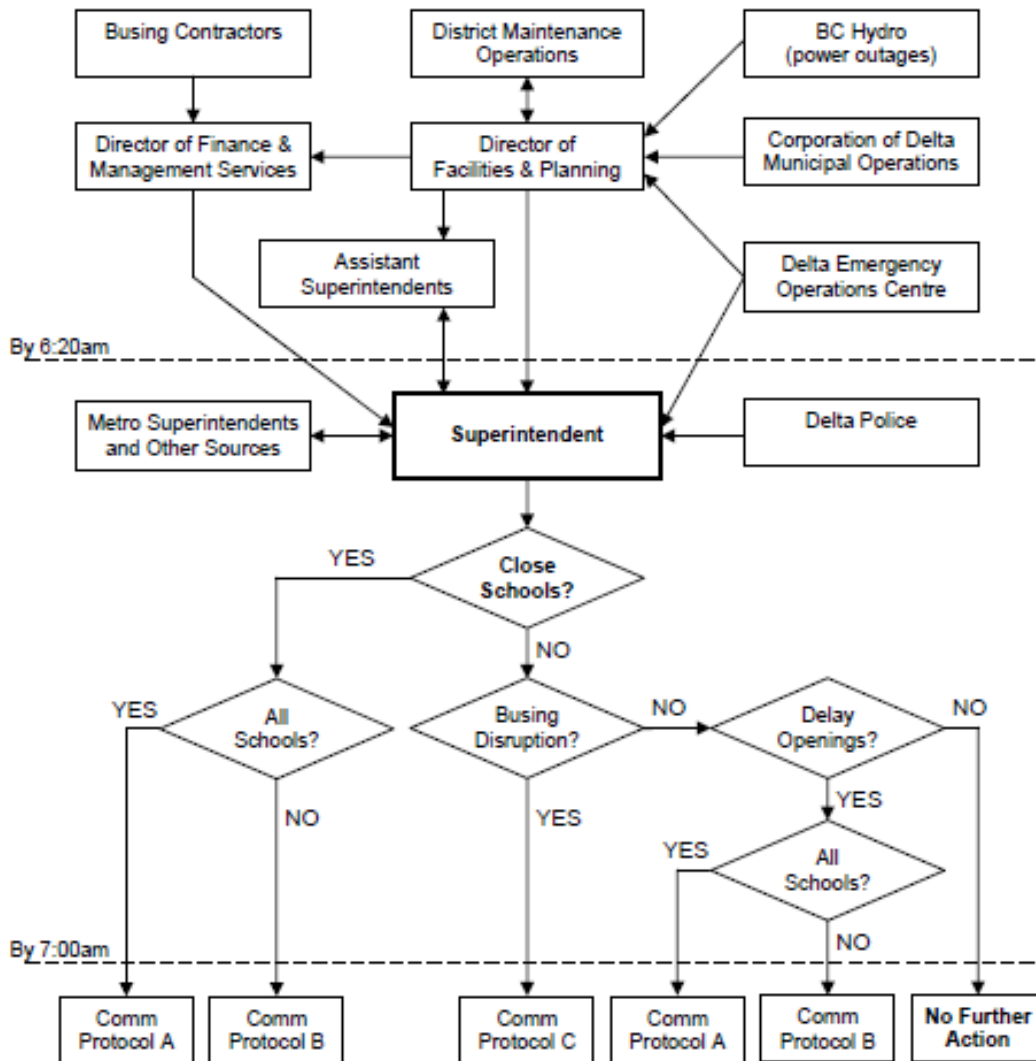
- a. The following staff have been designated as essential services and are required to report to work in order to ensure the safe and orderly operation of the school district:
 - All maintenance staff
 - Custodians
 - School sites clerical staff

Reference: Section 20, 22, 65, 73, 85, 90 *School Act*
School Regulation 265/89

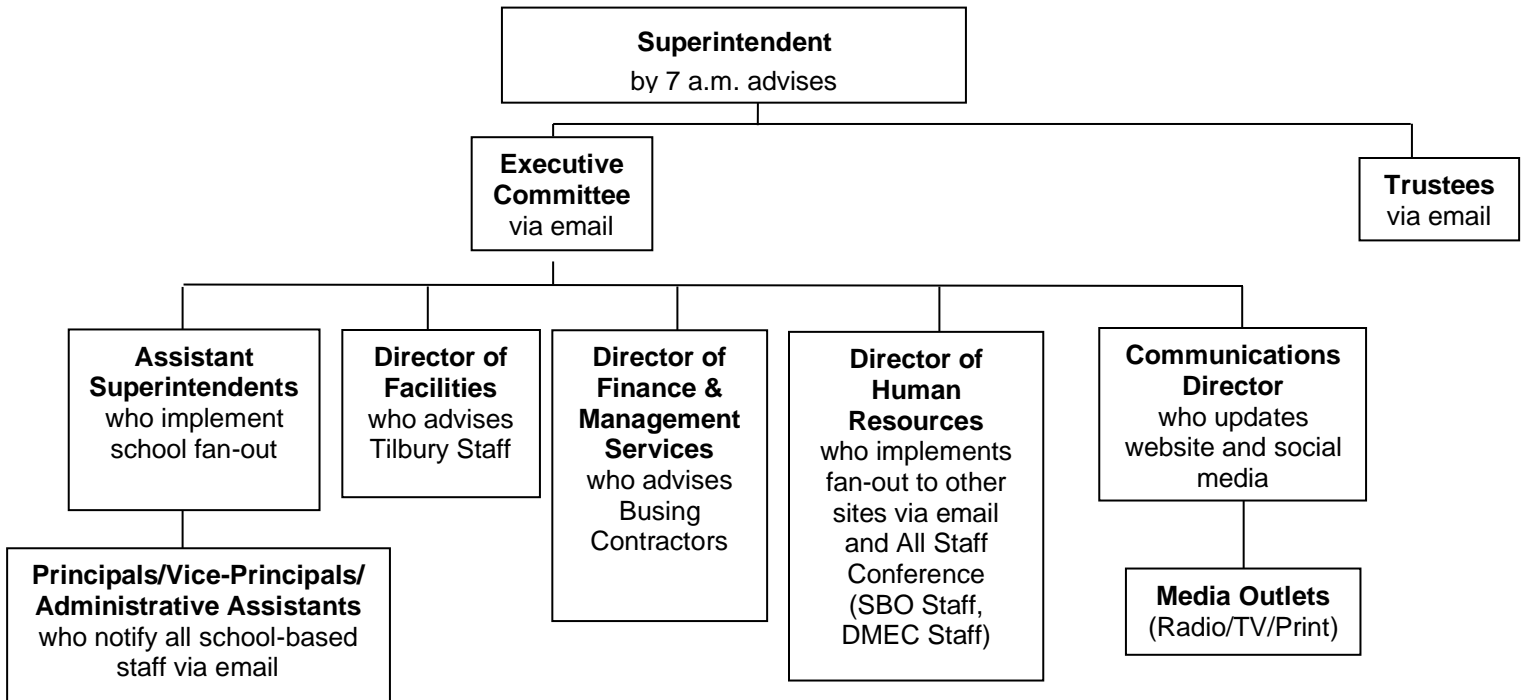
Administrative Procedure 131 – Appendix

DECISION MATRICES FOR SCHOOL CLOSING

1. Emergent Conditions Overnight



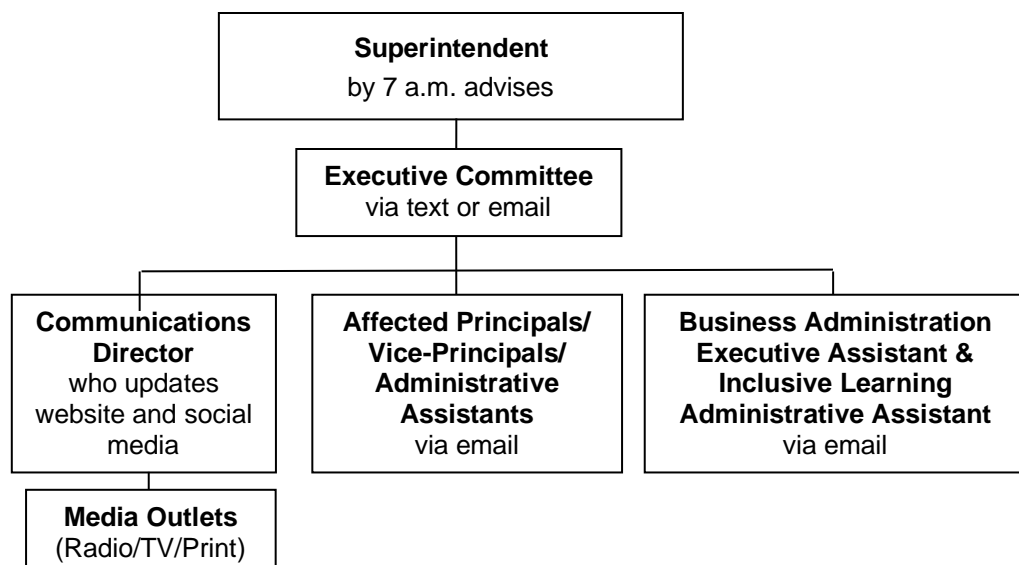
Communication Protocol A – District School Closing/Delayed Opening



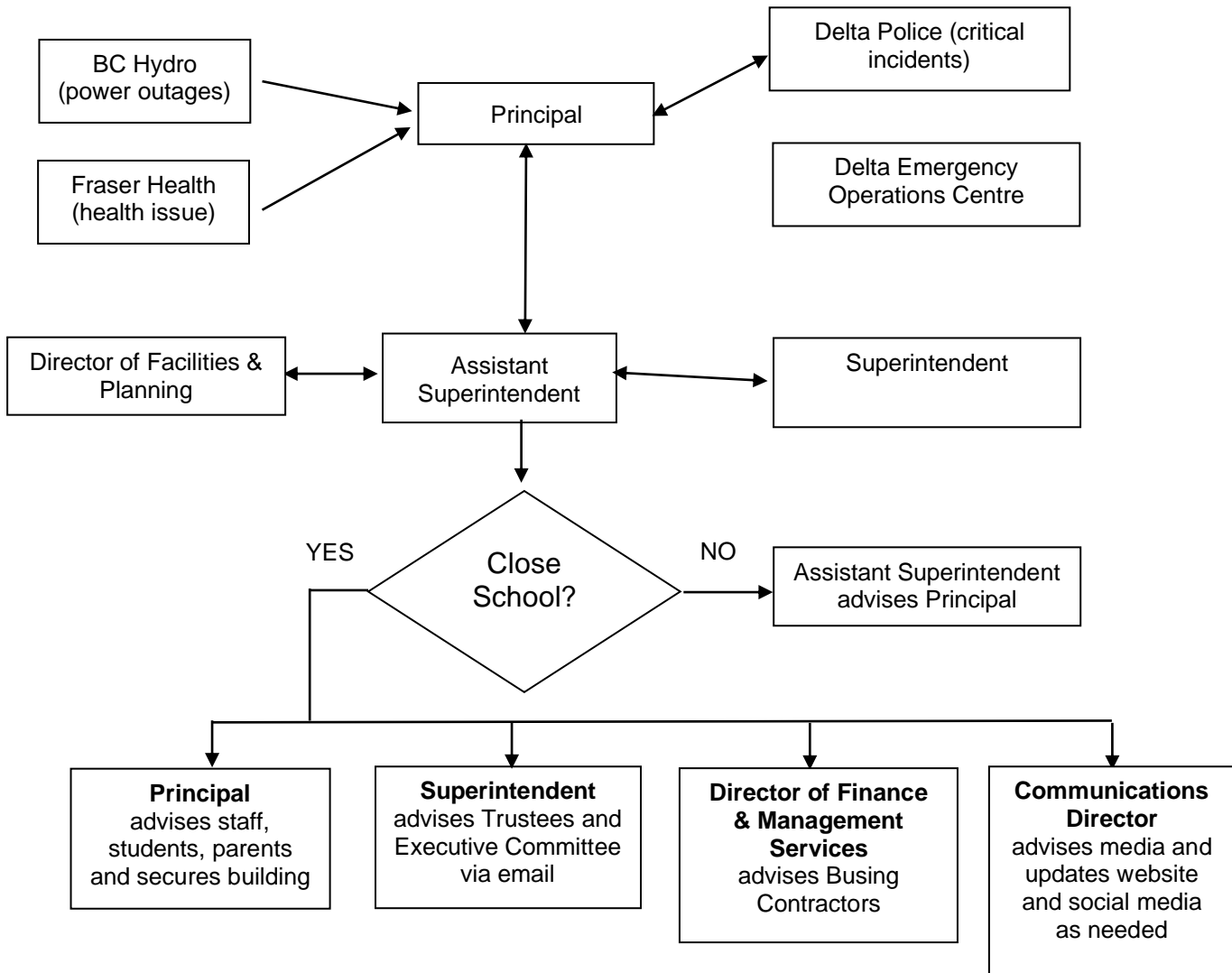
Communication Protocol B – Individual School Closing/Delayed Opening

Same as Protocol A, except only specific schools are identified in communications and Assistant Superintendents only contact affected Principals.

Communication Protocol C – Limited Bus Service



2. Emergent Conditions During the School Day



The Principal is also responsible for ensuring students are not released early from the school's supervision unless reasonable and age-appropriate provisions are made for their safe return home

Reference: Section 20, 22, 65, 73, 85, 90 *School Act*
School Regulation 265/89