



Procedure Section: **Facilities and Equipment**

**800**

Procedure Name: **Temporary Closing of Schools/  
Early Dismissal**

**804**

## **PROCEDURE**

# **Temporary Closing of Schools /Early Dismissal**

## Procedure

### 1. September

- Student Handbook provided to parents/guardians which includes reference to the appropriate policy;
- Student Handbook should contain instructions to be followed in the event of storm warnings received from school, through the school, or otherwise. Instructions should include listening to the radio, checking [www.nwobus.com](http://www.nwobus.com), and being available by phone and having alternate childcare if necessary. The instructions should also indicate that if at any time parents/guardians wish to pick up their child(ren) because of weather or road conditions they should do so;
- Student information is updated and parents/guardians are given notification that any change in address or telephone number(s) should be communicated to schools as soon as possible for use in emergency situations; and
- Staff Handbook includes detailed instructions.

### 2. October

- Letter to parents/guardians with Early Bus Dismissal Form (see sample);
- The letter may also include a statement as a reminder that if the buses do not run in the morning it will be announced on the local radio stations and posted on [www.nwobus.com](http://www.nwobus.com) and that if the buses don't run in the morning they will also not run in the afternoon; and
- Organize bus lists according to buses and by families. Spaces should be left for telephone numbers of parents'/guardians' work, home, or alternative care numbers.

*(similar language inserted above in "September".)*

### 3. Upon Notification of Early Dismissal

- Parents/guardians of elementary based students will be contacted by telephone or electronic means within two (2) hours of notification of the early dismissal, unless signed Early Bus Dismissal Form indicates otherwise; and
- Principal, or Designate, remain at school until all students have departed safely and remain available by cell phone where service is available or by other means until it is reasonable to assume all students have arrived safely at their destination.

## Sample For Teacher Handbook

### 1. Emergency Phone Numbers

Police	}	911 (or insert appropriate local number(s))
Fire Department	}	
Ambulance	}	

### 2. Purpose

The plan is to facilitate the early dismissal of bus students and/or all students in the event of severely inclement weather. It is absolutely essential to ensure the safe return of all students to their families.

### 3. Warning

The decision to dismiss students early rests solely with the Director of Education, or Designate. In the event of a community emergency, the official ordering of an Early Dismissal but be confirmed by the Director of Education or Designate.

### 4. Emergency Coordinator and/or Designate

Coordinator	}
Designate	}

### 5. Pre-Planning and Preparations

- a) Up-to-date class lists will be prepared to record attendance. These will be distributed by the Principal.
- b) Up-to-date emergency lists, naming students in families, complete with phone numbers will be prepared and kept for immediate use.
- c) These, and other, emergency procedures will be reviewed with students early in the winter and on the day of the emergency if appropriate.

### 6. Responsibilities and Procedures

The Principal will receive instructions and details of the Early Dismissal from the Director of Education or Designate. The Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium will e-mail Principals and administrative assistants the school bus departure times as well as post them to [www.nwobus.com](http://www.nwobus.com).

7. No elementary student will be permitted to leave the school until the parents/guardians, or alternates, have been contacted to verify that the child can get home and indoors (or

to a babysitter or some alternate safe haven) unless the signed Early Bus Dismissal Form indicates otherwise.

8. Administrative Assistant(s) and other staff will be assigned to telephones to contact parents/guardians. Parents/guardians contacted and confirmations will be recorded on the appropriate emergency lists. Contact regarding bused students will be made first.
9. All students will remain at school and under the supervision of teachers until specifically and individually dismissed by the Principal or Designate. The Teacher may dismiss a child to a parent/guardian who arrives in person. Please ask the parent/guardian to notify the office before they leave.
10. Students will not be permitted to use the telephone during the emergency without the permission of the Principal. The telephones will be needed to contact parents/guardians.
11. All staff shall remain at school until regular quitting time unless early leaving is specifically arranged by the Principal.
12. Some staff may be required to remain at the school for an extended period of time to supervise students who cannot get home.



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### Sample October Letter

To:  
From:  
Subject: **Early Bus Dismissal Because of Inclement Weather, or Other Emergencies**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

There are occasions when bus students need to be sent home early, such as severe winter storms.

For the safety of students, elementary schools contact all parents/guardians by telephone prior to an early bus dismissal. We want to ensure that it is safe for children to go home early. If we cannot get in touch with a parent/guardian or one (1) of the designated emergency contacts, we will not permit the child to leave the school.

\_\_\_\_\_ School has # buses and well over # bus students. As you can imagine, it takes a long time to telephone all parents/guardians. We are looking for ways to speed up the process, and still ensure the safety of students.

From past experience, many parents/guardians prefer that their children stay in school until regular dismissal time, and then parents/guardians pick up their children after school. Other parents/guardians, mainly those with students in grades 7 and 8, authorize their children to go home on their own.

We are asking all parents/guardians to complete the attached form, and **return it to the school by \_\_\_\_\_**.

If you know ahead of time what your children should do in the event of an early bus dismissal, and you do not need to be contacted by telephone, we would appreciate having that information.

If you need to be telephoned, please check the bottom box on the attached form, and we will do our best to contact you.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. If you have any questions about our emergency procedures, please call me.

Sincerely yours,

Principal



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**Sample October Letter**

Name(s) of Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When School Buses are Dismissed Early:

[Please Check One (1)]

Please keep my child(ren) at school until regular dismissal time. I do not need to be contacted by telephone prior to the early dismissal. I will pick them up at the school by 4:00pm, or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My child(ren) is/are permitted to go home early by bus on their own. I do not need to be contacted by telephone.

Other Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the previous instructions have been followed, I do not need to be contacted by telephone.

Please call me prior to sending my child(ren) home early by bus. The telephone number(s) where I can most likely be reached between 10:00am and 2:00pm are:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return By: \_\_\_\_\_