

PROCEDURE

**Temporary Closing of Schools
/ Early Dismissal**

Temporary Closing of Schools/Early Dismissal

September

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

October

- Letter to parents 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 station and posted on www.nwobus.com and that if the buses don't run in the morning they will also not run in the afternoon.
- Organize bus lists according to buses and by families. Spaces should be left for telephone numbers of the parents, work and home, or alternative care numbers.

(similar language inserted above in "September.")

Upon Notification of Early Dismissal

- Parents/Guardians of elementary bused students will be contacted by telephone or electronic means within 2 hours of notification of the early dismissal, unless signed Early Bus Dismissal form indicates otherwise.
- 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

I. Emergency Phone Numbers

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

II. 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.**

III. Warning

The decision to dismiss students early rests solely with the Director of Education (or designate). In the event of a community emergency official ordering an early dismissal, it must be confirmed by the Director of Education, or designate.

IV. Emergency Coordinator and Designate

Coordinator:
Designate:

V. Pre-Planning and Preparations

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

VI. Responsibilities/Procedures

1. 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

Sample for Teacher Handbook

2. No elementary student will be permitted to leave the school until the parents (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.
3. Administrative Assistant(s) and other staff will be assigned to telephones to contact parents. Parents contacted and confirmations will be recorded on the appropriate emergency lists. Contacts regarding bused students will be made first.
4. 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 who arrives in person. Please ask the parent to notify the office before they leave).
5. 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.)
6. All staff shall remain at school until regular quitting time, unless early leaving is specifically approved by the principal.
7. Some staff may be required to remain at the school for an extended period of time to supervise students who cannot go home.

Sample October Letter

To:
From:
Subject: **EARLY BUS DISMISSAL BECAUSE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, OR
OTHER EMERGENCIES**

Dear Parents:

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 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 or one 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. We are looking for ways to speed up the process, and still ensure the safety of students.

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

We are asking all parents 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



Early Bus Dismissal

Names of Students: _____

When school buses are dismissed early

[Please check one]

Please keep my children at school until regular dismissal time. I do not need to be contacted by telephone prior to the early bus dismissal. I will pick them up at the school by 4:00 p.m., or

My children 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 home early by bus. The telephone numbers where I can most likely be reached between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. are:

Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian

PLEASE RETURN BY _____