

SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY	
DM Approval:	Effective Date: Draft

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines regarding the closure of Yukon schools.

POLICY STATEMENT

Only very extreme circumstances warrant the closure of a school, and this does not include cold weather.

All Department of Education staff will take every necessary precaution to ensure the safety of students during periods of extremely cold weather, including the following:

- busing contracts must include provisions for spare buses and safety measures for travel in cold weather;
- regular communication to remind parents to ensure students are properly dressed when traveling to school in cold weather; and
- effective communication strategies to communicate changes to bus schedules or bus cancellations during periods of cold weather.

If a school closure is required due to mechanical problems, a fire or any other extreme circumstances, the school administrator must consult with the area superintendent before closing the school. This does not apply in situations where the school must be evacuated, even for an indeterminate period of time.

Only the Yukon Chief Medical Officer of Health has the authority to direct the closure of schools because of public health concerns.

When a school closure is required the Minister of Education will, in consultation with department staff (including the school administrator) and the School Board or School Council, will determine what course of action is required to recover any lost instructional time in order to meet the requirements of the *Education Act*.

A School Board or School Council may, in consultation with school administration, develop a school-based policy to address day-to-day activities at the school during periods of extreme cold.

Such policies must clarify how the school will adjust its activities during periods of extreme cold including: outdoor play by students; school opening and closing times; and the supervision of students.

The department recommends that the Cold Weather Policy established for a school should include the types of provisions included in the School Cold Weather Policy Template that is attached as Appendix 'A' and modified as the School Council or School Board deems appropriate.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Department of Education staff are responsible for following the requirements of this policy.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are properly dressed when traveling to school in cold weather.

School administrators are responsible for working with their School Board or School Council developing cold weather policies for their school(s), and School Boards and School Councils are responsible for approving those policies.

The Yukon Chief Medical Officer of Health is responsible for directing the closure of schools because of public health concerns.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Yukon schools.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In situations where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this policy cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or an unintended result, the decision may be based on the individual merits and justice of the situation. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective *Draft*.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES

Education Act, s. 46

HISTORY

School Closure Policy, effective November 19, 2009; amended effective Draft.

DRAFT

APPENDIX 'A'

SCHOOL COLD WEATHER POLICY TEMPLATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Students benefit from fresh air, exercise, and a daily routine at school. It is therefore important that they have daily outdoor activity as part of their normal school routine, even during periods of cold weather.

The temperature, the length of time spent outdoors, the need for appropriate outdoor clothing, and proper supervision are the main considerations of a cold weather policy.

COLD WEATHER POLICY

Subject to the following considerations, students are expected to participate in outdoor activities as part of their normal school day, even during periods of cold weather:

- School administration and staff will consider the prevailing weather conditions (temperature and wind chill) in deciding whether and for how long students will participate in outdoor activities during the school day.
- During cold weather, students must be supervised when getting dressed to go outside to ensure that they are appropriately dressed given the prevailing weather conditions. Students must also be supervised while they are participating in outdoor activities at school during cold weather.
- During periods of extremely cold weather students may be allowed to participate in outdoor activities for a restricted period of time, or they may be allowed to participate in indoor activities only.
- Students participating in outdoor activities during cold weather may warm up inside the school (e.g. in the boot room) after first checking with the supervising teacher.
- Parents may request that their child remain indoors during periods of extremely cold weather.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are properly dressed in winter clothing when traveling to school in cold weather.

Students are responsible for wearing appropriate winter clothing while participating in outdoor activities at school during cold weather.

School staff are responsible for monitoring students to ensure that they are properly dressed during periods of cold weather.

School administrators are responsible for developing cold weather policies and procedures for their school, and School Boards and School Councils are responsible for approving those policies and procedures

DRAFT