



AP F1 Unscheduled School Closure – District Operations

Legislative References: *School Act*, Section 73

Policy Reference: None

Collective Agreement References: GITA Article G25.10; CUPE Article 25.04

Date: January 20, 2025

Clear protocols are required to ensure the safety of student and staff during unpredictable weather or unforeseen events. This administrative practice outlines processes related to district operations during temporary, unscheduled school closures including those due to inclement weather.

Processes

Authority to Close Schools

1. School buildings shall be open and in session in accordance with the prescribed school calendar unless:
 - 1.1. the Superintendent of Schools grants the principal or designate permission to close temporarily.
 - 1.2. the Superintendent of Schools is unavailable to grant such permission and, in the opinion of the principal or designate, an emergency situation is serious enough to proceed with such permission being obtained retroactively.
2. A school may be closed temporarily when in the opinion of the Superintendent and/or a school principal or designate, the health or safety of students is immediately endangered, or would likely be endangered if the school remained open with students in attendance.
3. Every effort should be made to keep schools open during inclement weather or other event in which there is no immediate threat to the safety of student and staff in attendance, to benefit the educational opportunities of students.
 - 3.1. The final decision as to whether or not a student should attend school resides with the parent.

Determination of School Closure Category

4. District operations during inclement weather or other events will be driven by a determination of School Closure Category.



- a. The Superintendent is responsible for making the determination of School Closure Category in consultation with the Secretary Treasurer and Director of Operations (and school principal if applicable).
- 4.1. The Superintendent will consider weather severity and event impact when making their decision.
 - 4.1.1. Separate category determinations may be made for Mayne, Galiano, Pender, Saturna, and Salt Spring islands.
 - 4.1.2. Each day of a multi-day weather event will be assessed separately.
- 5. Temporary School Closures will be categorized as follows:
 - 5.1. Category 1 (One): Schools are open, and buses are running on main road routes only.
 - 5.2. Category 2 (Two): Schools are open, and buses are not running.
 - 5.3. Category 3 (Three): Schools are closed.
 - 5.4. Category 4 (Four): All worksites are closed, for all district employees.
- 6. Information on school closures or threats of closures due to inclement weather or other events, will be posted on the school website for localized events and telephone answering services (voice message) at the earliest possible opportunity, and ideally before 6:30 am. Where a closure, threat of closure or other event impacts more than one school location, this information will be also be posted on the District website.
 - 6.1. Website posts and notifications must begin by identifying the name of the school if closure or event is localized.
 - 6.2. Schools may use other regular communications such as telephone trees (call or text) and/or email distribution lists to notify families.

Work During Unscheduled School Closure

- 7. In the event of a temporary unscheduled school closure, usually associated with inclement weather, educational support staff, teachers, and school-based administrators should focus efforts to connect with students to ensure continuity of learning. Temporary school closures may provide opportunity to accomplish non school-based tasks.



- 7.1. It is expected that, when safe to do so, plant services employees will work to ready schools for reopening.
8. All employees are expected to make every effort to report to work when schools are open. This may include walking, public transit, carpooling, or other preplanned options.
 - 8.1. Safety of staff during inclement weather is a priority. Individual employees must make their own determination, based on best judgment, whether it is safe for them to report to work.
9. Expectations for attendance at work location and of employee pay shall align with the determined School Closure Category as follows:
 - 9.1. Category 1 (One) and Category 2 (Two): All employees are expected to report to work. If they determine they are unable to attend their location, they may request a personal emergency leave (GITA, article G.25) (CUPE, article 25.04).
 - 9.2. Category 3 (Three): Schools are closed, and employees are expected to make a reasonable effort to work from home. All employees will be paid their regular rate if scheduled to work. See clause 10 for exceptions regarding grounds maintenance workers and trades.
 - 9.3. Category 4 (Four): All worksites are closed and expectations to reach your work location are suspended. All employees will be paid their regular rate if they were scheduled to work.
10. To ensure readiness of schools for reopening to students, during Category 3 days, grounds maintenance workers and trades will be paid at time and half for hours worked to ready schools.
11. The Director of Operations will use their discretion to engage/callout employees to work during school closure days due to inclement weather.
 - 11.1. The Director will maintain an Inclement Weather Callout List open to Bus Drivers and Building Service Workers. This list will be used for employee callout at the discretion of the Director of Operations, should additional labour be required to ensure readiness of schools.



- 11.2. Employees will be called out from the list based on need, location and the discretion of the Director.
- 11.3. Employees called out from the list will be paid time and a half for hours worked.
- 12. Should a building service worker choose to leave their worksite before their regularly scheduled shift is completed due to worsening weather conditions, that employee must contact their supervisor. Regarding incomplete hours of work for the day, the employee may:
 - 12.1. request a personal emergency leave for the shift;
 - 12.2. ask for the incomplete hours of work to be unpaid; or
 - 12.3. arrange, where practical and with agreement from their supervisor, to flex the hours to a subsequent shift.