

Title: **SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER OR EMERGENCY**

Adopted: February 2017

Reviewed:

Revised: October 2023

Authority: Ontario Regulation 298: Operation of Schools, Sec 11

Related:

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the KidsAbility School Authority that when school buses are cancelled due to poor weather, when the temperature is extremely cold or the area is experiencing extremely hot or humid conditions or in the event of an emergency (as directed by emergency agencies, the Medical Office of Health or the Principal) the school will be closed.

**BACKGROUND**

1. TheKidsAbility School Authority has a prime concern for the safety and wellbeing of all students, families, staff and volunteers. The KidsAbility School Authority is committed to providing a safe and comfortable working environment.

1. Inclement weather, extreme temperatures, emergency conditions or another emergency may result in special measures to maintain comfort and occasionally may result in the delay or cancellation of transportation, closure or early dismissal of school.
2. There are many reasons why a school may be closed either before school starts or during the school day. Some of these emergency situations include fire, flood, power failure, breakdown of the heating or water systems and severe weather conditions. A plan must be prepared, as early in the school year as possible, to act in a planned, cooperative way in order to maximize the safety of all students, employees, volunteers and trustees in these emergency situations.
3. The KidsAbility School may be announced as closed, before school starts, or during the school day because of severe weather conditions or emergency situations including fire, flood, power failure or breakdown of heating or water systems.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. The decision to close school programs or cancel student transportation are made in the best interests of safety for students, staff and bus drivers.
2. Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not it is safe for their children to attend school when it is open.
3. In order to maintain the safety of all students, families, staff and volunteers, the KidsAbility School Authority has developed and will follow these procedures regarding the closure of the school due to inclement/extreme weather or emergencies. These procedures will be reviewed and revised, as is necessary, on a yearly basis.

**PROCEDURES**

1. The Principal shall inform parents about the possibility and procedures to be followed in the event of bus cancellation, student dismissal or school closure due to emergencies and severe weather procedures via the KidsAbility School Authority Parent Handbook and Mail Merge email system.
2. The Chair of the KidsAbility School Authority Board shall be informed, as soon as possible, of the decision to close programs.
3. Email contact lists will be established annually for staff and families. If a closure is directed, the Principal and/or the Executive Assistant will e-mail staff and families in order to relay any information related to a school closure as quickly as possible.

**Closure due to bus cancellations**

1. The decision to close school programs or student transportation services is at the discretion of the Principal or designate in consultation with Transportation Services. If transportation is cancelled, KidsAbility School will be closed for the day.
2. Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) will be responsible for communicating decisions with respect to Inclement Weather to the media, bus operators and the KASA Principal.
3. The primary means of communication to KASA staff regarding bus cancellations is the KASA staff email distribution list.
4. There may be occasions when weather conditions deteriorate *after* the students have arrived at school. A decision will be made by the Principal with the bus company to take students home early. All parents/guardians will be contacted before the busses leave.

**Closure Due to Extreme Cold, Heat or Humidity**

1. All students, employees, volunteers and trustees will be made aware of the hazards of high heat and humidity or extreme cold and the steps they can take to protect themselves.
2. Theschool will have procedures in place (see below) for informing students, volunteers and trustees of weather conditions that will bring high temperatures and humidity or extreme cold.

**Closure due to Emergencies**

1. Email contact lists will be established annually for staff and families. If a closure is required, the Principal and/or Executive Assistant will e-mail staff in order to relay any information related to a school closure as quickly as possible.
2. Teachers are responsible for contacting each student’s family to confirm that they have received the information. Up-to-date contact information (home telephone numbers and/or email addresses) must be kept with the teacher in case of closure.
3. Teachers are also required to have current information with them to contact co-op students and volunteers who may be working in their classrooms.
4. The Executive Assistant (or designate) will update the school phone voicemail.
5. The Principal will coordinate with the appropriate centre management staff to inform them of the school closure. The Principal (or designate) will advise any impacted contractors or researchers, as well as volunteers and the transportation consortium, of the closure.

**General Note**

1. When the KidsAbility School program is closed according to this policy, employees shall be assigned to work from home.
2. In the case of an extended emergency, the Principal (or designate) will attend (if appropriate) the school on a weekly basis to ensure that the school is safe and secure.

**RESOURCE**

[**Ontario Regulation 298: Operation of Schools Sec 11**](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900298)