
Policy Section:	Transportation
Policy Title:	Inclement Weather School Closure and Emergency Evacuation Arrangements
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15. INCLEMENT WEATHER, SCHOOL CLOSURE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium recognizes there will be occasions when inclement weather will cause student transportation services to be disrupted with the Renfrew County Catholic and Public-School Boards.

15A.1 The decision to cancel school transportation is the responsibility of the transportation operators in co-operative consultation with the RCJTC.

When transportation services are cancelled, the schools remain open. If a route or transportation services are cancelled in the morning, this decision remains in effect for the entire school day. If parents and guardians who choose to bring their child(ren) in to school on these days, they are also responsible to provide transportation from school in the afternoon for their child(ren).

Note: RCJTC is a shared integrated operation with limited flexibility. We cannot cancel one part of an area without impacting other parts. Cancelling transportation service is a decision made for the safety of our students.

The **www.onthebus.ca** website has been chosen by the RCJTC to be the designated website to broadcast interruptions to transportation services and emergency school closures from all areas in the county of Renfrew. Media outlets obtain this information from the RCJTC website.

The RCJTC website has been set up to find transportation information and to answer common transportation questions. You may access this website using a link on both Boards' websites, by toggling on the RCJTC.ON.CA links, or by asking for **www.onthebus.ca**. This website includes a section that provides today's reports on route delays or cancellation (this service is active from September to June).

15A.2 **Parents and guardians** should:

- know their child(ren)'s route number and the transportation operator;
- become familiar with the Inclement Weather policy and procedures;

and

- provide the RCJTC and their child(ren)'s school with updated emergency contact information (including phone number).

Teachers should also be aware of the policy and procedures. If parents/guardians call in, they are to be deferred to the www.onthebus.ca web site.

Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. Unexpected mechanical problems with the vehicle may occur, and vehicles cool off very quickly in cold weather. Thus, children must be prepared.

When transportation service is cancelled in the morning, it is understood that the cancellation will apply to the afternoon as well, and that parents/guardians who bring their children to school on that day will also be responsible for their return home.

IT IS A PARENTS/GUARDIANS RIGHT NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER.

15A.3 Weather Cancellations

A decision to cancel transportation is made between 5:00 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. Decisions are based on several factors including precipitation, air temperature, wind chill factors, road conditions, and projected weather forecasts.

The schools in Renfrew County have been divided into the following **Zones**:

- (a) Zone 1 – Deep River Area Schools
- (b) Zone 2 – Petawawa Area Schools
- (c) Zone 3 – Pembroke Area Schools
- (d) Zone 4 – Madawaska Area Schools
- (e) Zone 5 – Opeongo Area Schools
- (f) Zone 6 – Renfrew Area Schools
- (g) Zone 7 – Arnprior Area Schools

15A.4 Before the School Day Begins

The decision to cancel transportation due to inclement weather shall be made after discussion with transportation operators and other transportation agents from various areas.

Transportation operators check road conditions before 5:30 a.m. The transportation operator contacts RCJTC by 5:30 a.m. with their decision to operate or not. The RCJTC website, www.onthebus.ca, is updated on or about 6:00 a.m.

Road conditions (as seen before 6 a.m.), weather forecasts, and police

reports are all part of the consideration for safe operation of the vehicles.

It is the decision of the parent/guardian as to whether they send their child(ren) to school using the Board provided transportation.

15B. System Wide Transportation Cancellation

In a system wide transportation cancellation: all vehicles in the system would be cancelled.

15C. General Area School Transportation Cancellations in Extreme Circumstances

In general area transportation cancellations: all vehicles in a zone would be cancelled.

15D. Individual Route Cancellations

An individual driver who runs into difficulty, prior to the start of the route, or on route, and is unable to complete the route.

Due to the geographical size and diversity of the Renfrew County Catholic and Public-School Boards, it is recognized that there may be varying weather patterns, which may necessitate the cancellation of student transportation services in one or more geographical areas or to one or more specific schools rather than on a system-wide basis.

15E. School Transportation Cancelled for the Day

Subject to the foregoing Clauses 15A, 15B, 15C and 15D, when transportation service is cancelled in the morning, it is understood that the cancellation will apply to the afternoon as well, unless otherwise specified, and that parents/guardians who bring their children to school on that day will also be responsible for their return home.

15F. Individual Route Delays

In the case of an individual route delay and a replacement vehicle may need to be dispatched.

15G. Individual Vehicle Breakdowns

In the case of an individual vehicle breakdown and a replacement vehicle is dispatched.

15H. Early/Late School Dismissal

During the School Day:

When the weather deteriorates during the day, while all the students are at school, RCJTC will attempt to maintain their regular schedule. The **decision to send the students home early or to cancel transportation services for the end of the day** may be made by the General Manager of RCJTC, after discussion with transportation operators. In the event that such a decision is made, which will only happen as a last resort, the school principals will then be responsible for contacting the parents and guardians to inform them that their child(ren) will be leaving school early. Only students whose parents/guardians have been contacted will be dismissed. It will be the responsibility of parents and guardians who could not be contacted, to provide transportation for their child(ren) at the end of the school day.

15I. Emergency School Closure/Evacuation

In case of an emergency evacuation caused by a single emergency, or upon implementation of a municipal emergency preparedness program during regular school hours, the Board/RCJTC shall have priority in the use of the school buses. Only when the Board/RCJTC has completed the evacuation will the school buses be released for other purposes.

Transportation operators shall be expected to provide such service promptly, combining routes where possible. The RCJTC shall compensate the transportation operators for expenses only if, in order to provide this service, extra trips are required.

15J. Emergency Numbers

At the beginning of each school year, a list of emergency operators and principals' telephone numbers is provided to the transportation operators and to the respective boards.

Related RCJTC Administrative Procedures:

AP.01.81 Inclement Weather, School Closure, and Emergency Evacuation
Transportation Arrangements

Related RCJTC Administrative Forms:

F.01.81.1 Inclement Weather Spotter Report
F.01.81.2 Record of Transportation Cancellations or Delays
F.01.81. A Communication Procedures for System Wide Transportation
Cancellations
F.01.81. B Communication Procedures for General Area Transportation

Cancellations

- F.01.81. C Communication Procedures for Individual Route Cancellations
- F.01.81. D Communication Procedures for Individual Route Delays
- F.01.81. E Communication Procedures for Individual Vehicle Breakdowns
- F.01.81. F Communication Procedures for the Transportation Service Sector
During Emergency School Closure and or Early or Late Dismissal