

Medicine Hat Public School Division

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**MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"**

SECTION 800 – Facilities and Transportation

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: SCHOOL CLOSURE UNDER EMERGENT CONDITIONS

PROCEDURE CODE:	806 AP 001
Policy Reference: 806 – School Closure Under Emergent Conditions	

Background: Closures of schools and school programs on operational days are necessitated only if emergent situations threaten the safety of students, staff and visitors. This procedure outlines considerations and guidelines for school closures. We are committed to providing safe and caring learning and working environments for students, staff, families and members of the community who visit and utilize MHPSD schools and programs.

PROCEDURE

1. If the school administration (principal or designate) becomes aware of a reason why a school cannot remain open, the Superintendent or designate will be consulted to determine whether the school should be closed.
2. In an emergent situation the Superintendent or designate, in consultation with the Board Chair and appropriate stakeholders, has full authority to temporarily close one or more schools or programs.
3. If students arrive when the school has been closed, school staff will provide supervision to those students, until arrangements can be made for them to return home safely.
4. Unless required for the safety of students, schools will not be closed between the time that buses start picking students up in the morning until regular dismissal time. If a school building is determined to be unsafe during these hours, we will follow our emergency preparedness plan and transport students and staff to a predetermined evacuation centre. Appropriate action will be taken to notify families, ensure the safety of students and staff, and provide supervision until arrangements can be made for students to return home safely.

5. Reasons for closure may include (but are not limited to the following):
 - 5.1. Inclement Weather Conditions such as extreme temperatures, natural disasters, environmental emergency, etc., which may prevent the safe operation of a school.
 - 5.2. Utility or Mechanical system failure/structural damage, likely to be detrimental to health and safety (i.e.. long term disruptions to water, sewer, electrical, heating/ventilation, or gas service). Additional stakeholders may include consulting with City of Medicine Hat and the MHPSD facilities department.
 - 5.3. Staff shortage: Every effort will be made to ensure there is enough staff to safely operate, when this is not possible the superintendent may direct the closure of the school.
6. School bus transportation cancellation:
 - 6.1. School bus transportation may be cancelled if buses are not able to operate safely as per 806 AP 002: School Bus Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather.
 - 6.2. Cancellation of school bus transportation does not mean that schools will be closed.
7. Communication: The Superintendent or designate will notify families by announcing school closures and cancellations in one or more of the following ways: on the MHPSD website, school website, email and phone call. Local media outlets will be notified. School staff will provide supervision for students who arrive at school when it has been closed, until arrangements can be made for students to return home safely.
8. Employees are required to report for work, unless otherwise directed by the Superintendent.

REFERENCES

[300 AP 001 – Emergency Preparedness Plan](#)

[300 AP 002 – Emergency Drills](#)

806 AP 002 – School Bus Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather - *new*
 Alberta Education Act – Closure of Schools (section 62)

Approved: May 17, 2005
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