



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Who decides if the buses will run?

Each bus driver decides for his/her route and/or the school division decides in consultation with drivers. The decision is based on a risk assessment. The driver is responsible to notify the Manager of Transportation services, the school principals affected by the route closure. Parents will then be notified by school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone calls in regards to the bus route cancellation.

2. If one bus doesn't run, are all buses cancelled?

No. The decision is route - by - route. The Division is over 3000 square miles and conditions vary a great deal on the same day. Usually the buses in a general area are all affected. For example, if there is a storm in Three Hills some of those buses may not run while the buses in Strathmore area may run.

3. What conditions result in a bus route cancellation for the day?

If the conditions appear to pose a significant risk to students, then the route will be cancelled. Risks include conditions like fog, snow-blocked roads, extreme cold, icy conditions, and impassable roads due to wash-outs. In Alberta winter driving conditions occur from September - May so the buses are equipped for normal winter driving. Cancellations occur only in extreme circumstances. Often the first inclement weather of the season causes the most difficulty.

4. What if you believe, as a parent, that conditions pose a risk, but buses are still running?

As a parent, you can always make the decision to keep your students off the bus. You can choose to drive them to school yourself or keep them home if you believe road conditions are not safe for you to drive.

5. During very cold days, how warm are buses in the winter? What happens if there is a mechanical problem?

All our school buses are professional maintained and have equipment installed to help keep riders warm on cold winter days. However, if there is a mechanical problem, depending on the route location, it may take some time for a replacement bus or other help to arrive. **It is a parent responsibility to ensure all your children are dressed for the weather when riding the bus. While mechanical problems are rare, students should all have warm coats, hats, mitts and boots when riding on cold days.**

6. How many times do bus route cancellations occur?

This depends entirely on weather conditions. Based on past experience, on average, a particular bus route might be cancelled 2-3 times per year. This varies from year to year.

7. Are schools open when buses aren't running?

Mostly, that depends in the severity of the weather. Parents will be notified as to the school status. Schools are open to receive children who are able to get to school. Remember that one or two route closures may impact only a few students. Many times a bus route or two is closed but school carries on in the normal way because the vast majority of students are able to attend.

8. If severe or inclement weather exists, there are three possible options for school status:
  - 8.1. **Green Level –** Due to weather and travel conditions, some busses may not be running.  
School is open and regular classes will be offered
  - 8.2. **Yellow Level –** Due to severe weather and travel conditions, no busses are running.  
School is open but regular classes may or may not be offered.  
Parents/guardians make their own decisions about sending their students to school.
  - 8.3. **\*Red Level –** Due to the severe weather and travel conditions the school is closed. Do not send students to school. Due to the severe weather we are unable to ensure the school doors will be unlocked, or any staff will be in the building  
\* Require Superintendent approval.

9. If the school is officially closed, will someone be in the building to receive students who may not know about the closure?

If the school status is yellow, then yes, there will be somebody in the building. If the school status is red, we cannot guarantee any staff at school or the school doors will be unlocked. Do not send students to school when the status is red.

10. How will I know if the bus route is cancelled or the school is closed?

You will be notified by school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone call that the school bus route is not running. If the school is closed, buses won't be running. Announcements about school closures will be through school website and social media, text messaging and direct phone calls, school social media and websites will also be updated with this information.

11. Why don't the schools close every time the bus routes are cancelled?

Bus route closures may not affect the majority of the students and many parents are able to make other arrangements for their children to attend school, the schools don't automatically close because of bus route closures. The school closes only when the route closures are pervasive and staff, too, cannot safely drive to work.

12. What if the school is open, the buses aren't running, and I feel compelled to have my child at school?

Please don't take unnecessary risks. If your child attends school regularly, then missing a day or two over the course of the year, due to travel conditions will not affect his/her achievement. Missed assignments due to weather can be rescheduled to accommodate your child.

13. How soon will I know about bus route closures or a school closure?

The people who make the decisions about route closures will consult and a decision will be made no later than 6:30 a.m.

14. Most of the bus information applies to bus routes for students who live out of town. What about students who live in town?

Bus drivers in town can often drive their routes when closures are necessary for out-of-town routes. If the town buses won't be running, you will be notified by school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone calls. Town buses usually run in all weather conditions UNLESS the school is closed. If the school is closed, please do not send or transport your child to the school. In the event of a school closure announcements about school closures will be by school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone calls.

15. If a bus route is cancelled in the morning, will the bus run at the end of the school day to take students home who were able to find other transportation to school?

This depends. If a bus does not run in the morning due to inclement weather, the driver will do the same evaluation to determine if it is safe to run their route.

If it is determined to be safe, the bus will run in the afternoon.

If it is not safe afternoon (ie. Inclement weather) the bus WILL NOT run in the afternoon. The bus driver will contact administrators and parents will then be notified by school website and social media, text messaging or direct phone calls no later than noon that day.

For parents choosing to drive their children in the morning when the bus does not run, we cannot guarantee the bus will run to transport student's home from school. Parents choosing to drive should plan to pick their children up.