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LDSB Communications messaging to parents

While the decision to cancel buses occurs somewhat regularly throughout the school year based on weather and road conditions, the closure of schools is an infrequent and extraordinary measure. A decision to close schools is not taken lightly but is made when student safety and staff safety is at potential risk. Decisions sometimes happen quickly and can be different across the district based on different circumstances or conditions. The Board makes our decisions with the best information it has at the time. The Board's guiding principle in making these decisions is always the safety of students, staff and volunteers working at our schools and centres.

Busing:

Busing is coordinated by Tri-Board Transportation Services. Parents may sign up for direct notification of delays and cancellations on [Tri-Board's website](#). Click on the tab "Delays and Cancellations" near the top of the webpage. There is also other pertinent information regarding delays and cancellations for parents/guardians at this location including a listing of local radio stations that will air cancellations and delays.

Bus drivers, operators and municipal roads officials assess weather and road conditions between 4-5 a.m. on school days using a variety of data including accredited weather forecasters such as Environment Canada. They then report any conditions or issues that might affect the safe transportation of students and report these to Tri-Board Transportation to make a determination on busing around 5:30/6 a.m. Sometimes decisions change, or are made later than 5:30/6 a.m., as conditions and available information changes. Tri-Board then notifies affected school boards and families via its website, email, text message and dedicated cancellation/delay Twitter account @BusDelayNCancel. Parents may also follow Tri-Board Student Transportation Services Inc. on [Facebook](#). This information is also widely shared on local radio stations, cable TV and through various school board communications tools such as Board websites and, in the case of Limestone, via its Twitter account @LimestoneDSB where possible. The definitive source for cancellations is Tri-Board.

Should a system-wide shutdown be recommended, Tri-Board then consults with the Directors of Education with area school boards to determine a plan of action and any required contingencies. Tri-Board makes its decisions based on the best information it has at the time.

Schools remain open when buses are cancelled unless otherwise stated. When buses are cancelled in the morning, they are cancelled for the entire day. If children are dropped off at school when buses are cancelled, they must be picked up by a parent or guardian or alternate approved contact person at the end of the school day.

Early Dismissal /School Closures:

Early dismissal of students and possible resulting school closures are uncommon. A decision to close a school or schools is an extraordinary measure when student and/or staff safety is in potential jeopardy. Sometimes, closures are the result of extended interruptions or failures of infrastructure, utilities or other building systems. Sometimes, closures are required when weather, road or other conditions might affect the safe transportation of students or staff – regardless of whether that transportation is by school bus, by vehicle, or by foot. Walkers, for example, might also be at risk should they have to contend with slippery sidewalks and/or the crossing of slippery roads and intersections.

Decisions on community use of schools (school rentals) are made on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency contact information:

In the event of early dismissal and/or school closures, it is imperative that schools have updated emergency contact information for all students. Families are asked to fill out emergency contact information at the beginning of the school year. It is essential that any changes to this information are provided to the school as soon as possible, if and when it changes. This includes change to address, telephone (home, work and cell phones), and those appointed by parents/guardians as alternate emergency contacts.

Schools must be able to reach parents/guardians to confirm that students are able to take the bus or walk home in emergency situations. Schools cannot do this without updated contact information. Also, it is important families think carefully about who they choose as an emergency contact. It should be someone who is able to make a decision regarding your child(ren) and/or pick up that child from school as soon as possible should you be unavailable.

While some school staff remain on site to ensure all students are bused and/or picked up safely, the safe arrival home of staff is also an important consideration.