



ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT Emergency Closure Plan



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life

Emergency Closure Procedures and Procedures for Changes in Normal Operation

Purpose: This document provides procedural guidance for ASD employees in the event that severe weather conditions, natural disasters, power outages or other unforeseen circumstances result in school closure or a delay in start time. It also outlines work attendance rules for school closures, and delayed start days.

Background: Due to location, Anchorage and its surrounding communities experience extreme weather conditions and geologic hazards (earthquakes and volcanic activity) that could impede normal school operations. Snow and ice present the most common seasonal risk; starting as early as September and lasting into May. As a large school district, weather and road conditions may vary across the District. As a result, the District must anticipate and be prepared to react to extreme weather and road conditions.

Safety will always be the predominant consideration in the emergency closure decision-making process. The goal of the District's Emergency Closure Procedures is to enable leaders to make informed decisions in the best interest of student, employee and public safety.

Procedures for Determination of Road Conditions.

1. Preparation/anticipation:

- a. Beginning in mid-September, the Senior Director of Transportation (SDT) will verify the next day's weather forecast through NWS (or other reputable weather sources) before the end of the workday, Monday through Thursday; and on Sunday evenings. When warranted, the SDT contacts the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to warn of potential weather conditions that could affect normal District operations.
- b. The COO informs the Superintendent and other Cabinet members of the SDT's weather warning. The COO also informs key personnel and issues guidance to ensure the District is postured to assess and respond to road conditions the following morning.

2. Event Day Procedures:

- a. Starting early morning, ASD safety officers, contractors, Maintenance and Operations personnel and others conduct active and passive reconnaissance of the roads within the District's boundaries. The SDT and the Senior Director of Maintenance & Operations (SDMO) determine the status of road conditions and schools and assess the safety and feasibility of busing operations and commuter driving. Information and analysis are obtained from the following sources:
 - 1) Anchorage Police Department
 - 2) State of Alaska Road Maintenance Department
 - 3) Anchorage and Eagle River road maintenance departments
 - 4) ASD Safety Officer, Transportation Supervisor, and contractor personnel
 - 5) ASD Maintenance, Operations, and Operations Security departments
 - 6) National Weather Service (NWS)
 - 7) Alaska State Troopers (additional resource for Seward Highway)
 - 8) Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (673d Air Base Wing)

b. The SDT and the SDMO shall contact the COO no later than 4:30 am to report on the status of roads, sidewalks, and schools; and provide an assessment of the impact on school operations. The COO will then contact the Superintendent to provide an update and make recommendations. Based on the information provided and other considerations, the Superintendent will decide on the following actions:

- 1) Normal operations: All schools and District activities open and on schedule.
- 2) Delayed opening of schools: Schools will open later than the regular schedule. School buses will run later than the regular schedule. All staff report at the usual time if safety permits.
- 3) Schools-only closed: School-based staff may report to alternative work sites of individual choice, provided the missed school day does not have to be made up. If teachers are required to make up the emergency school closure day, AEA members will be notified on or before the closure day that it is a non-working, non-paid day.
 - a) Custodial and facilities/maintenance staff report.
 - b) State regulations allow ASD to declare in-service and emergency closure days to be “days in session” based on the administration’s approved calendar. Any closure that occurs after the exhaustion of those approved days will require an adjustment to the school calendar, to meet the statutory requirement for length of the school year.
 - c) Education Center staff report for work at the usual time, or as road conditions allow.
- 4) All District facilities closed: Only emergency staff and all facilities/maintenance staff report. Designated emergency staff members have been identified at each school and by each ASD Department Director.
- 5) School/site-specific closure(s): In the event that an emergency closure applies to a limited number of specific schools or facilities, both teaching and non-teaching staff at those locations will follow the attendance rules for school closure days.
 - a) For Teaching Staff: If the effect of the closure exceeds the two possible closure days that are built into the school calendar, those days will be non-working, non-paid days and will need to be made up.
 - b) For Non-Teaching Staff: The procedure will be the same as outlined in paragraph 3.a (Schools-only Closed).

c. If the decision is made to modify school start times or close schools, the COO immediately contacts the Chief of Communications and External Affairs to begin the notification process. The COO will notify Chiefs, who in turn will notify their direct reports for their communication to respective staff, ensuring that all personnel are notified.

d. The COO contacts the 673d ABW (907-227-1900, Alternate 907-691-6681) and the Municipal Manager to inform of the District’s school plans for that day.

4. If the Superintendent is not available, the COO will confer with the SDT and make the decision.

5. Communications and External Affairs: All closings or changes in normal operation are to be reported publicly by the Chief of Communications and External Affairs. The public announcement should be made no later than 5:30 am. Exceptions may occur on days when weather or road conditions change rapidly during the morning hours. The Communications Department will notify local media outlets and provide updated information on the following ASD communication channels.

- a. Website: www.asdk12.org
- b. ASD App
- c. Blackboard Messaging
- d. Text: via subscription
- e. X: www.x.com/asd_info
- f. Facebook: www.facebook.com/AnchorageSchoolDistrict
- g. Phone: 907-742-4000

6. Deteriorating Conditions: In the event that weather and road conditions change/deteriorate after a decision to keep schools open and are considered unsafe, the SDT will contact the COO with an evaluation and recommendation. The COO will contact the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent as appropriate.

7. The Chief of Communications and External Affairs will notify the Chief Human Resources Officer, Senior Director Talent Management and Assistant Director Talent Management who will notify Substitute Dispatch. The COO will notify Student Nutrition and the Office of Emergency Management (who will notify APD Dispatch) of changes in normal operation.

8. Similar procedures are in effect for in-service/non-student days. The content of public and staff messages relayed will be edited appropriately if changes in normal operation occur on an in-service day.

9. After-School Activities: A decision to close schools due to unsafe road conditions could result in a concurrent decision to cancel or postpone after-school activities for that day. Weather conditions could deteriorate during a school day that results in a decision to cancel after-school activities. A decision to cancel after-school activities will be made no later than 12:00pm, and information will be immediately communicated to schools. The Chief of Communications and External Affairs will notify the media and the community.

10. Community Services: In the event of a school closure due to extreme weather conditions or other circumstances, the District may cancel or reschedule community events that are planned in district facilities. The Director of Community Services will consult with and make case-by-case recommendations to the COO.

Procedures for Changes in Normal School Operation

Hazardous Travel and Work Attendance Rules.

1. Attendance Rules for Delayed Start Days Only:

Principals: Principals will attempt to arrive at school earlier than usual.

Teaching Staff: Teachers will report for duty at their regular times and be prepared to supervise students whose parents deliver them at the usual time, provided they can travel safely.

Non-Teaching Staff: All non-teaching staff will be expected to report for duty at their regular times provided

they can travel safely.

TOTEM: Employees reporting to work by the rescheduled start time will receive pay for the time between the regular start time and the rescheduled start time.

2. Attendance Rules During Emergency Closure Days:

Principals: Principals will attempt to arrive at school earlier than usual.

AEA: On emergency closure days for schools, teachers may report to alternative work sites of individual choice provided the missed school day does not have to be made up. Alternate sites of individual choice may include homes if it is the professional judgment of individual teachers that homes are the appropriate places in which to perform their duties under emergency conditions. Unless otherwise announced, schools will reopen on the following day, and teaching staff should report to their standard work locations.

Teachers who have pre-arranged personal/sick leave for a day that is declared an emergency closure day will have their leave accrual charged as initially scheduled for that day unless the substitute dispatch system receives a call changing their request before the beginning of the public announcements.

If the District will be required to make up a school closure day, teachers will be notified on or before the closure day that it is a non-working, non-paid day.

Custodians/BPOs: Custodial employees are expected to report for duty as usual, with building plant operators attempting to arrive at school earlier than usual.

Facilities/Maintenance: Employees are expected to report for duty as usual.

TOTEM: Employees are expected to report for work unless they judge that conditions are hazardous, in which case they will use compensatory time, annual leave, or unpaid leave (in that order) for any time not worked. Employees on unpaid leave may arrange with their supervisors to make up for time lost. Support staff represented by TOTEM, but not regularly assigned to schools, are to be treated like school employees during an emergency school closure that affects all schools. Remote work opportunities will not be available on emergency closure days unless approved by the District.

ACE: When District facilities are closed to students due to inclement weather conditions, employees will telephone the supervisor if arrival will be late unless phone contact is not feasible. When an employee arrives within 90 minutes of the regular starting time, full credit will be given for the day's attendance. If travel to the workplace is hazardous, the absence will be charged in the following order: (1) non-work days; (2) if the employee has no non-work days, annual leave; (3) if the employee has no annual leave, unpaid leave. By mutual agreement between the supervisor and the employee, the employee may be allowed to utilize flexible scheduling to make up for missed work or may work from an alternative work site.

Bus Drivers/Attendants: Employees should not report to work when students are not in attendance unless otherwise notified.

Food Service: Food Service employees may report to work for up to one-half their normal shift hours, and/or can use annual leave or unpaid leave for any hours they do not work, on emergency

closure days.

Substitutes: Teacher substitutes on long-term substitute assignments are expected to follow the emergency closure procedures for teachers on emergency closure days. All other substitutes, including building subs, should not be dispatched or assigned any work on emergency closure days. Building subs should be paid only if they report to work and the principal is able to find work for them during the day.

4. The following employee groups should not report to work or be assigned remote work on emergency closure days:

- a. Bus drivers and attendants (will be notified by 5:30 a.m.)
- b. Crossing guards and noon duty attendants
- c. Substitutes (except long-term teacher subs)

5. School Closure and Paycheck Release: If a determination to close schools is made on a day that paychecks would typically be released for either monthly paid employees or bi-weekly paid employees, the following procedures will apply:

- a. School paychecks will be held at the ASD Education Center and will be available for pick-up between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. from the Payroll Department;
- b. Paychecks that are not picked up will be sent to schools for release to employees on the next district workday that schools are open;
- c. Direct deposits will be available online as usual.

6. Media Announcements: The following announcements are typical for public notification:

Delayed Start: "All ASD schools will open one hour later than usual today due to weather and road conditions. School buses are operating one hour later than the normal schedule. All school district employees will report for duty at their regular time."

Schools Closed: "All ASD schools are closed today due to weather and road conditions. Employees should follow emergency closure procedures for their building or department. Unless otherwise announced, schools will reopen tomorrow" (or on Monday if closure occurs on Friday).

All District Facilities Closed: "All ASD schools and support facilities are closed today due to weather and road conditions. Only emergency staff should report for duty, including all facilities and maintenance staff. Unless otherwise announced, schools will reopen tomorrow" (or on Monday if closure occurs on Friday).

7. Emergency Closure Procedures Update: The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Emergency Closure Procedures on an annual basis no later than the first week of October.