



TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE

NWOSSC 112

SECTION 100 GENERAL

112 EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION

Statement and Rationale

Conditions may arise between bus arrival to school and regular school dismissal times that require alternate bussing arrangements for students. These conditions are usually related to emergencies such as severe or inclement weather, road conditions/ closures, school closures, or other community emergencies.

Procedure

1.0 General

- 1.1 The General Manager or designate will make reasonable efforts to monitor emergency alerts, weather and road conditions during operational days, including before morning runs.
- 1.2 All available information will be used to inform decisions regarding early or late dismissal of transportation students. This information will include, but is not limited to:
 - Observed weather and road conditions;
 - Weather reports and forecasts provided by Environment Canada (www.weatheroffice.gc.ca);
 - Environment Canada Weather Alerts
 - Road conditions and closures published by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (Ontario 511);
 - Road checks conducted by Bus Operators throughout the service area;
 - Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) public communications;
 - Municipal emergency alerts and road closure notices.
- 1.3 Due to the large geographic size of the Consortium service area, early or late dismissal of bus students may be required for only specific areas, communities, schools, or bus routes, while others remain unaffected.

- 1.4 Alternate/Emergency transportation may involve route alterations such as route doubling, combining, or consolidating routes. The General Manager or designate will approve all route alterations as part of emergency/alternate transportation.

2.0 Early Dismissal

- 2.1 In the event of a school closure due to loss of essential services for an extended period or identification of otherwise unsafe conditions within the school, school administration will contact the Consortium with all relevant information, and the Consortium will work collaboratively with school and board personnel to coordinate alternate bussing.
- 2.2 Early dismissal of bussed students may result from severe inclement weather that arises after morning bus runs are completed or underway. Early dismissal will be used where an early bus run time will allow buses to transport students home under safer conditions than waiting for scheduled run times.
- 2.3 Timing will be dependent on the specific conditions requiring the early dismissal. The General Manager or designate will consult with the affected boards and schools when determining the early dismissal time.

3.0 Late Dismissal

- 3.1 Late or delayed dismissal of bussed students may be required in the event of an emergency resulting in conditions that are not suitable or safe for the operation of school buses during regular, scheduled run times. These conditions may result from hazardous weather events (e.g. tornadoes), or unscheduled closure of highways with no suitable alternate routes or detours available.
- 3.2 When such conditions occur, buses assigned to the affected routes will remain on standby for a reasonable period after scheduled bus run times.
- 3.3 Under exceptional circumstances, the General Manager or designate may, in consultation with the affected school boards, cancel affected bus routes. In the event of a cancellation, schools will arrange alternate school pick-up or accommodations for affected students

4.0 Communication Protocols

- 4.1 When emergent conditions are identified that may lead to an early or late dismissal, the General Manager or designate will contact the appropriate Bus Operator(s) to place buses and drivers on standby. The General Manager or designate will also inform Consortium Board of Directors, and school Principals of the possibility of early or late dismissal.

- 4.2 When a decision is made to enact an early or late dismissal, Consortium staff will immediately inform Bus Operator(s) and school Principals by phone. The General Manager or designate will notify Consortium Directors.

- 4.3 Schools will be responsible for contacting families in the event of an early or late transportation dismissal. Member school boards will ensure that all schools have a plan in place to contact parents/guardians as needed. Every parent must be contacted prior to early or late dismissal of bus students, unless the school has pre-arranged written direction for the student indicating whether they use transportation or remain at the school in the event of an early or late dismissal.

- 4.4 The Consortium will post notice of early or late transportation dismissals on the Consortium website, www.nwobus.ca, and the NWOSSC Facebook page. Notifications will be sent to affected families through the NWOSSC Parent Portal App. In the event of a system-wide or significant event, email alerts may be sent to subscribers at the discretion of the General Manager or designate.

Date Last Reviewed	2025 (2019, 2024)
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Associated Policies/Procedures	111-GENERAL – Bus Cancellations
References	

