

# CHATHAM-KENT LAMBTON ADMINISTRATIVE SCHOOL SERVICES

Policy:	Inclement Weather
Reference:	STS-PO-001-16
Adopted:	June 22, 2016
Revised:	



## **Policy Goal:**

It is the policy of the Member Boards to keep all school and Board facilities open during periods of inclement weather, even when transportation has been cancelled, except in those rare circumstances when extreme conditions result in school closure announcements.

## **Policy Statement:**

The Member Boards and Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) value the safety of its students and employees as our utmost priority. During periods of inclement weather that result in hazardous conditions, student transportation may be cancelled under the following procedures.

## **Preamble:**

CLASS is a joint venture between the Lambton Kent District School Board and the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

CLASS is equally owned by the Lambton Kent District and the St. Clair Catholic District School Boards who mutually benefit in the provision of shared services. CLASS is comprised of various different departments including Student Transportation Services, Community Use of Schools, Child Care Services and Energy & Environmental Services.

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## Policy Guidelines:

### 1.0 Administrative Procedures:

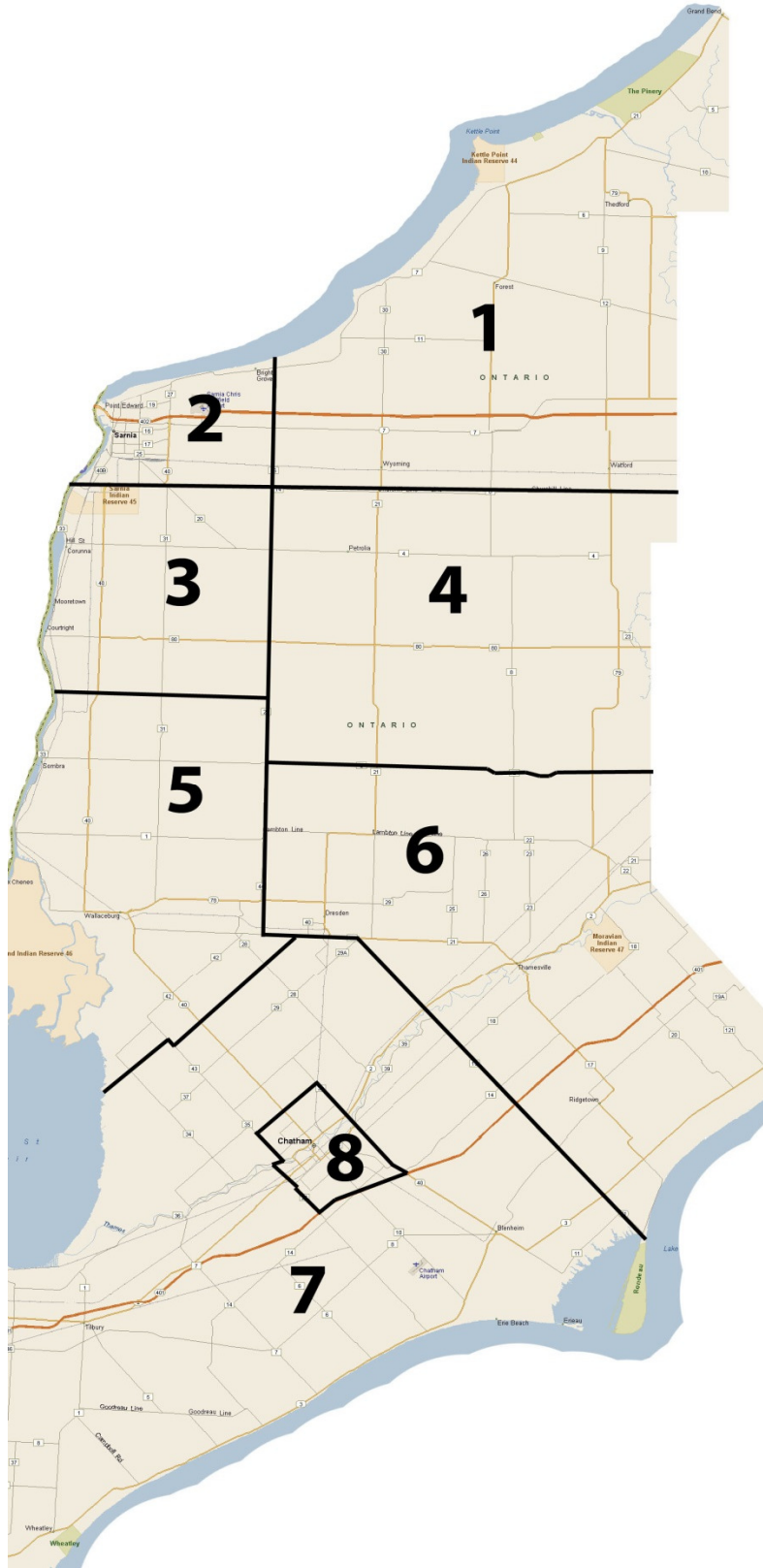
- a. All facilities of the Boards will remain open unless otherwise indicated, even if some or all bus routes are cancelled.
- b. The Directors of Education, or designate(s), will approve the closure of facilities in accordance with the Education Act and approved Student Transportation Policies, Regulations and Procedures.
- c. The Manager of Transportation Services, after consultation with the School Bus Operators, will approve curtailment, cancellation or disruption of transportation schedules in accordance with the Education Act and approved Student Transportation Policies, Regulations and Procedures.
- d. The Manager of Transportation Services will provide, through the radio stations, and various electronic media, consistent, timely and accurate information of decisions resulting from inclement weather conditions.
- e. For the purpose of administering transportation services for the Lambton Kent District School Board and the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, the total geographic area of Lambton County and Chatham-Kent Municipality will be divided into eight distinct zones as described in Section 2.0, Weather Zones.
- f. Two Area Spokespersons, one for Zones 1 through 4 and one for Zones 5 through 8, will represent all of the Zone Captains and the school bus operator's assessment as to operational status for all Zones in their area.

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## 2.0 Weather Zones:

Zone	Boundaries
Zone 1	N - Lake Huron W - Mandaumin Road S - Churchill Road E - County Boundary
Zone 2	N - Lake Huron W - St. Clair River S - Churchill Road E - Mandaumin Road
Zone 3	N - Churchill Road W - St. Clair River S - Bickford Line E - Mandaumin Road
Zone 4	N - Churchill Road W - Mandaumin Road S - Bentpath Line E - County Boundary
Zone 5	N - Bickford Line W - St. Clair River S - Angler Line - Bear Line - Green Valley Road E - Mandaumin Road
Zone 6	N - Bentpath Line W - Mandaumin Road S - Kent Bridge - Base Line - Green Valley Road E - County Line
Zone 7	N - Angler Line - Bear Line W - Lake St. Clair - County Boundary S - Lake Erie E - Kent Bridge - Base Line - Green Valley Road
Zone 8	N - Pioneer Line W - Bear Line Road - Bloomfield Road (including Wilcox Park Area) S - 401 HWY E - Prince Albert Road / Communications Road (Inclusive)

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## 3.0 Operational Procedures:

### 3.1 Prior to Regular School Hours – Snow, Ice & Freezing Rain:

In situations of inclement weather, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will facilitate a recommendation to the Manager of Transportation Services for those zones regarding whether or not school buses will operate in those zones.

Area Spokespersons, together with Zone Captains and School Bus Operators, will make recommendations regarding whether or not to operate school buses within a designated zone based on factors such as:

1. road conditions
  2. contacts with various police services
  3. contacts with other Zone Captains
  4. the condition of the loading zones at schools
  5. local weather reports & forecasts
  6. reports from road crews
  7. spotters assigned to each zone
  8. wind-chill factors
- b. Each Zone Captain will communicate the transportation recommendation for each zone to the Area Spokespersons who will contact the Manager of Transportation Services prior to 6:00 a.m.
  - c. The Manager of Transportation Services will compile and coordinate the zone recommendations and formulate a decision regarding whether or not to provide transportation services in each zone. The Manager of Transportation Services will post an update on the student transportation website [www.schoolbusinfo.com](http://www.schoolbusinfo.com) and communicate with designated media prior to 6:20 a.m. Media announcements will follow an established template format. School Administrators and Board Senior Administration will be promptly informed of any closures directly via email.

The Transportation Analyst will provide backup to the Manager of Transportation Services for this procedure as required.

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- d. Buses that have been cancelled in the morning due to inclement weather will not return students in the afternoon. If parents drive students to school in the morning, they are responsible to pick their children up and take them home in the afternoon.

### **3.2 Prior to Regular School Hours – Fog Only:**

In situations of inclement weather involving only fog, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will make a recommendation whether or not to declare a Fog Cancellation within a designated zone.
- b. Area Spokespersons, Zone Captains and Transportation Services personnel will follow the procedures detailed in Section 3.1, parts b and c, to communicate Fog Cancellation recommendations, and resulting decisions.
- c. Buses that have been cancelled in the morning due to fog will operate in the afternoon to return students to their homes.
- d. For fog conditions persisting throughout the day, refer to Section 3.4.

### **3.3 Situations Occurring During Routes:**

A driver should use the following procedures in the event he/she is unable to continue with the route:

- a. Drive the bus slowly to the shoulder of the road, or off the traveled portion of the road to a safe location.
- b. When necessary, advise passengers to move to the front and shoulder side of the bus (as many as possible).
- c. Ask for assistance, if necessary, to keep passengers calm and quiet.
- d. Call dispatch to advise them of the location, circumstances, and the last student picked up. Dispatch shall then notify the school(s) and Student Transportation Services of the situation and provide regular updates.
- e. Under no circumstances should students be returned to their homes (morning route). Procedures to return students to their homes should follow the process outlined in Section 3.4.
- f. When it is safe to proceed, advise dispatch and proceed in accordance to road conditions. Dispatch shall then notify the school(s) and Student Transportation Services.

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In the event that the conditions preventing the continuation of the route persist and do not appear to be improving, Dispatch shall notify the Zone Captains who in turn shall consult with the Area Spokesperson:

- g. Each Area Spokesperson (a school bus operator), after consistent and thorough contact with all other Zone Captains and school bus operators operating within their zones, will make a recommendation whether or not to declare a mid-route service cancellation within a designated zone.
- h. Area Spokespersons, Zone Captains and Transportation Services personnel will immediately communicate the mid-route Service Cancellation recommendation with the Manager of Transportation Services.
- i. The Manager of Transportation Services (or designate) will submit the recommendation to cancel the remaining service to Senior Administration of the member boards for final approval. The system notification process will begin immediately following approval from Senior Board Administrators.
- j. In the event of a mid-route service cancellation decision, the Boards will inform the Manager of Transportation Services or designate of the decision. Each Board's communication staff shall inform the local media which zones are impacted by the mid-route service cancellation.  
The information shall then be posted on [www.schoolbusinfo.com](http://www.schoolbusinfo.com) and communicated to the bus operators.
- k. Senior Board Administration will notify Principals of the decision for a mid-route service cancellation.
- l. School Principals or designates will notify parents / guardians of students at the school of the service cancellation and need to pick up students at the school.
- m. Bus drivers shall bring any students on the bus prior to the service cancellation to their school at the earliest opportunity with the utmost concern for safety and shall keep their dispatch regularly updated of their status / location.

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## 3.4 Situations Occurring During the School Day:

Early release / afternoon service cancellation shall only be considered as a last resort, or in emergency situations. If inclement weather necessitates the need to consider the early dismissal of students, or the cancellation of bussing, the following procedures will occur:

- a. The School Bus Operators and Zone Captains will consult with the Area Spokesperson with their recommendation for early dismissal or the cancellation of bussing in that zone.

Most schools require up to three (3) hours for the completion of their parental contact system. Therefore; other than in exceptional circumstances; the recommendation from Area Spokespersons for an early release must be submitted to Student Transportation Services by no later than 10:00am.

The Manager of Transportation Services will submit the recommendation to the Senior Administrations of the member boards for final approval. The system notification process will begin immediately following approval from Senior Board Administrations.

- b. Senior Board Administrations will notify Principals of the decision for an early release or cancellation.
- c. It is the Principal (or designates) responsibility to notify parents of the decision. In the event that a parent cannot be contacted, students shall not be released from school unless alternate arrangements are in place. Secondary students may be released without parental notification upon notifying the office of their plan.
- d. The Board's communication staff will notify the media and the Manager of Transportation Services will post an update to [www.schoolbusinfo.com](http://www.schoolbusinfo.com) immediately following confirmation from Senior Board Administrations of the early dismissal / cancellation of bussing arrangements.
- e. If inclement weather necessitates the early dismissal of students, the buses will only make one run home. The buses will not come back at the regular dismissal time or any other time to take any additional students home.



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## **4.0 Cancellation of Late Buses:**

The school bus operator(s) will advise the school Principal that late buses have been cancelled prior to the end of the daily lunch period at the school to enable students to take the regular buses home.

## **5.0 Cancellation of Charter Buses:**

Charter bus trips shall not occur during periods of time when the conditions have been deemed to not be safe for student transportation. The school bus operator(s) will advise the school Principal when charter buses have been cancelled as a result of unsafe conditions.

## **6.0 Communications:**

CLASS shall maintain a current library of the policies, regulations, administrative and operational procedures and parental expectations for Transportation on their student transportation website [www.schoolbusinfo.com](http://www.schoolbusinfo.com).

## **7.0 Recommendations to Facilitate Transportation Services:**

The following supporting activities will support the effective implementation of this procedure:

- a. The Manager of Transportation Services should maintain contact with various media representatives to facilitate the processing of transportation announcements to the general public.
- b. The Plant / Facility Managers should maintain contact with the various private contractors for the removal of snow to ensure that the clearing of school bus loading areas, parking lots, and access areas is given priority. If contractors have been unable to clear school properties, the Plant / Facility Manager shall inform the Manager of Transportation Services.

## **8.0 Emergency Situations:**

In the event of an emergency situation not previously addressed in this procedure, CLASS shall develop and implement timely local solutions in collaboration with the school Principal(s), Board Administration and local bus operators that support student safety.