

Annex _____ to ASD EOP

EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCEDURES

October 2015



Anchorage School District
742-4000

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 closure and delayed start days.

Background. Due to location, Anchorage and its surrounding communities are subject to extreme weather conditions and geologic hazards (earthquakes and volcanic activity) that could impede normal school operations. Snow and ice present the most frequent seasonal risk; and that risk starts as early as September and can last well into May. As a geographically large school district (Chugiak to Girdwood), weather conditions do vary across the District; and in most cases road conditions also differ. As a result, the District must be prepared to assess conditions across the District's boundaries; and be flexible to decisions that affect schools and activities differently.

The goal of the District's Emergency Closure Procedures is to enable informed decisions that minimize disruption and preserve school days, but not at the cost of student, employee or public safety.

Procedures for Determination of Road Conditions.

1. Preparation/anticipation:

- a. Beginning in mid-September, the Director of Transportation (DT) will verify the next day's weather forecast through NWS (or other reputable weather source) before the end of the work day, Monday through Thursday; and on Sunday evenings. When warranted, the DT contacts the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to warn of potential weather conditions that could affect normal District operations.
- b. The COO informs the Superintendent of the DT's weather warning and contacts key personnel directly involved in the emergency closure process and issues guidance to ensure the District has qualified employees and other resources in place to adequately assess road conditions the following morning.

2. Event Day Procedures:

- a. Starting as early as 0300, ASD safety officers, contractor personnel and others initiate area reconnaissance of the roads within District boundaries. The DT and the Director of Maintenance & Operations (DMO) will determine the status of road conditions and schools; and assess the safety and feasibility of busing operations and commuter driving by collecting data and evaluations from the

following sources:

- 1) Anchorage Police Department
 - 2) State of Alaska Road Maintenance Department (for state maintained MOA roads)
 - 3) Anchorage and Eagle River road maintenance departments
 - 4) ASD safety officer, Transportation Supervisor and contractor personnel
 - 5) ASD Maintenance Department
 - 6) National Weather Service
 - 7) Alaska State Troopers (additional resource for Seward Highway)
- b. It is possible that there is no advance notice by the National Weather Service of a weather event. It is possible that some areas of the municipality are impacted and others are not. It is also conceivable that a municipal night shift employee on duty (such as a maintenance person) or a school BPO (building plant operator) may observe adverse weather conditions. This person or persons should ensure that the DMO is notified. The DMO will then contact the DT. Both Directors will dispatch additional personnel in order to obtain a clearer picture of the situation in order to report to the COO. If someone in the DT's department reports on adverse weather condition and conveys that to the DT, then the DT would notify the DMO. Regardless on how the information is received, the DT will call whatever other outside agencies, as deemed necessary, to obtain the information needed. Agencies mentioned above are reliable resources.
- c. The DT and the DMO contact the COO by Motorola (primary) or phone no later than 0500 to report the status of roads, walking conditions, and schools with a geographic assessment of the feasibility to conduct normal operations. The COO will then call the Superintendent to provide an update and make recommendations. Based on the information provided and other considerations, the Superintendent will decide on the follow actions:
- 1) **Normal operations:** All schools and District activities open and on schedule.
 - 2) **Delayed opening of schools:** Schools will open later than the normal schedule. School buses will run later than the normal schedule. All staff report at usual time if safety permits.
 - 3) **Schools only closed:** Teachers may report to alternative work sites of individual choice, provided the missed school day does not have to be made up. If teachers will be 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 staff report; facilities/maintenance staff report; other support staff report as specified in appropriate contract.
 - b) State regulations allow ASD to declare in-service and emergency closure days to be “days in session” up to a total of 10 per year. **Any closure that occurs after the exhaustion of those 10 days will require an adjustment to the school calendar, in order to meet the statutory requirement for length of the school year.**
- 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 an emergency closure applies to a limited number of specific locations, 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 *Attendance Rules For School Closure Days Only*.
- d. If the decision is made for a delayed opening of schools, closure of schools only, all district facilities closed or school site specific closures, the superintendent will notify his/her direct reports (PAO, CFO, Chief Academic Officer and HR Director). These individuals as well as the COO will notify their direct reports, who in turn will activate their individual “notification trees” to ensure all key personnel are notified.

4. If the Chief Operating Officer is unable to contact the Superintendent, then the Chief Operating Officer will confer with the Director of Transportation and make the decision.

5. All closings or changes in normal operation are to be reported to local media outlets in the Anchorage area by the Executive Director of Communications starting immediately after notification by the Superintendent. Notification should be completed approximately 20-30 minutes after Communications is alerted. **Public announcements should start no later than 5:30 a.m.** Note: The superintendent makes the final decision

for a change in normal operations on inclement weather days with public notification by 5:30 a.m. Exceptions may occur on days when weather or road conditions change rapidly during the morning hours.

Updated information will be available on the following media:

- a. www.asdk12.org
- b. ASD-TV Channel 14
- c. www.twitter.com/asd_closures
- d. www.facebook.com/AnchorageSchoolDistrict
- e. Main switchboard at 742-4000.

6. If weather and road conditions change after an initial decision is made, the Transportation Department and contractor personnel will immediately notify the Director of Transportation who will call the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer will then call the Superintendent. The new information will be analyzed and a decision made to delay the start of school or cancel classes at a school, a group of schools, or all schools. The updated information will be made public using the resources listed above.

7. The Chief Human Resources Officer will notify the Executive Director of Human Resources Staffing and Operations, who will notify Substitute Dispatch. The Chief Operating Officer will notify Student Nutrition of changes in normal operation.

8. Similar procedures are in effect on 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. There may be times when school is being held that the weather conditions deteriorate and a decision will be made regarding after school activities. If the decision is made to cancel after school activities, that decision will be made by noon of that day by the ASD superintendent or his/her designee. This information will be relayed from the top down. The Public Affairs Officer will ensure the media is informed and will assist in fielding questions.

Procedures for Changes in Normal School Operation

Hazardous Travel and Work Attendance Rules.

1. Determination of School Closure: On days when it is deemed necessary to alter normal operation procedures (delayed opening, school closures, altered transportation or work schedules) because of weather or road conditions, a determination to that effect will be made by the superintendent. If the action taken constitutes an emergency school closure and students are directed not to report, or if the conditions occur on an in-

service day, the following procedures will be employed:

2. **Notification:** Anchorage media outlets will be notified of the status of delay in opening, school closure, transportation changes, or changes in the normal work schedule. Principals, administrators and the primary secretary will be requested to report to work early in their buildings so they can assist with telephone inquiries regarding weather conditions, the status of school opening time, school closure and determination of the need for substitutes. The ASD Education Center main telephone line will carry a recorded message encouraging callers to monitor information channels or call their school for the latest information.

3. **Attendance Rules for Delayed Start Days Only:**

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

Teaching Staff: Teachers will report for duty at their regular times, and be prepared to supervise students whose parents deliver them at the normal 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.

4. **Attendance Rules For School Closure Days Only:**

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

Teaching Staff: 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. If teachers will be 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. 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 normal 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 originally scheduled for that day unless a call changing their request is received by the substitute dispatch system prior to the beginning of the public announcements.

Substitutes for school support staff should not be dispatched on school closure days.

Non-Teaching Staff: Custodial employees are expected to report for duty as usual, with building plant operators attempting to arrive at school earlier than normal.

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 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.

ACE: Employees are expected to report for work as usual and will telephone the supervisor if arrival will be late, unless contact is not feasible. When an employee arrives within 90 minutes of the normal starting time, full credit will be given for the day's attendance. If travel to the workplace is hazardous, the absence will be charged one of the following ways: (1) if the employee elects, the day may be charged to annual leave; (2) if the employee has no annual leave days accrued or does not wish to charge the day to annual leave, the absent day may be unpaid; (3) by mutual agreement between the supervisor and the employee, the employee may be allowed to utilize flexible scheduling to make up work missed or may work from an alternative work site.

5. The following employee groups should not report when students are not in attendance:

- a. Bus drivers and attendants (will be notified by 5:30 a.m.)
- b. Student nutrition employees working in school buildings
- c. Crossing guards and noon duty attendants

6. School Closure and Paycheck Release:

In the event that a determination to close schools is made on a day that paychecks would normally 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 deposit advices will be available online as normal.

7. 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).

8. Emergency Closure Procedures Update: The Chief Operating Officer is responsible to review and update the Emergency Closure Procedures on an annual basis no later than 1 October.