

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 165

### INCLEMENT WEATHER and OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY

#### Background

The Division is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. In instances of inclement weather, decisions regarding outdoor activities must prioritize health and safety.

There are times when inclement weather may threaten the safety of students and staff while they are in attendance at school. In the event of such a circumstance, the Principal must exercise judgement as to whether students are to be allowed outside of the building before, during and after the school day.

#### Definitions:

For the purpose of this Administrative Procedure:

- A. **Inclement Weather:** Severe or extreme weather conditions that pose a risk to health and safety, including but not limited to:
  - a. Cold temperatures (e.g., below -25 degrees including wind chill)
  - b. High winds/rains
  - c. Extreme heat
  - d. Wildfire smoke
  - e. Other hazardous weather conditions. Reference [Alberta Air Quality](#)
- B. **Wind Chill:** The perceived decrease in air temperature felt by the body due to the flow of air.
- C. **Air Quality:** The condition of the air in the **environment**, which can affect human health. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is used to assess air quality levels. An [AQHI](#) of 7 or above indicates a high health risk, and outdoor activities should be limited or rescheduled.

#### Procedures

1. Students shall not be permitted outdoors if the temperature is below -25 C, including the wind chill.
2. Division schools, unless otherwise directed by the Superintendent, will stay open during periods of inclement weather.
3. Principals shall make the decision whether or not students and staff go outside by considering a variety of factors including:
  - a. Current inclement weather conditions, reference the following:

- i. [Weather Network](#) for the current weather forecast.
  - ii. [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#)
  - iii. Alberta Health Services website for [Air Quality Events Health Information](#) of current advisories.
4. Principals shall complete a simple risk assessment of inclement weather conditions and amend or cancel activities based on provincial weather indicators.
5. During periods of wildfire smoke the AQHI Map shall be referenced for mitigating the risk. In situations where smoke is a cause of concern contact facility maintenance to set the air exchanged to recirculate mode. Once the air quality improves ensure air exchange is reset to normal.
6. Principals shall review field trip forms considering inclement weather conditions and amend or cancel activities based on weather forecasts.
7. Parents/guardians will be informed of any changes to school operations through established communication channels.
8. Each school must have procedures to keep students, staff, and volunteers safe from inclement weather and changing weather conditions. This may include a shortened recess and/or lunch break schedule, rescheduling recess and/or outdoor activities opening/locking doors, change in bell time etc.
9. Principal Responsibilities:
  - a. Communicate that students are to re-enter the school at the end of the day if they miss their bus, a sibling forgets to meet them, etc.,
  - b. Ensure that a process is in place for handling parental requests for students to remain inside for recess is clearly communicated.
  - c. Reference Hour Zero “Inclement Weather (Cold)” emergency procedures where severe weather conditions may disrupt normal operations of schools.
  - d. Assess the situation and implement safety protocols as necessary for any notifications of severe weather conditions received through Alberta Emergency Alert.
10. Parental Responsibilities
  - a. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to develop a cold weather safety plan for their children when it is very cold or when the wind chill is significant. This includes checking the forecast and ensuring appropriate clothing.

*Reference:*

*Education Act, SA 2012, c E-0.3*

*Occupational Health and Safety Act*

*[My Alberta Health Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#)*

*[Alberta Air Quality](#)*

*[Environment Canada Wind Chill](#)*

*[Environment Canada Wind Chill Index Poster](#)*

*Hour Zero Wildfire General Response Procedures*

*Hour Zero Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools*