

Buses cancelled? Does that mean it's a "snow day"?

The cold weather in January and the cancellation of buses and classes caused a bit of confusion and questions from parents and students.

Our [Administrative Procedure 131 - Inclement Weather Disruptions to Transportation and Classroom Schedules](#) explains the criteria we use to determine when and if buses are cancelled, classes are cancelled or schools are closed. While bus cancellations happen at some point every school year, class cancellations (commonly referred to as a snow day because students are not expected to attend school), and school closures are rare.

Here are some frequently asked questions we get when buses or classes are cancelled:

Q: If buses are cancelled, does that mean there's no school for all students?

A: Buses can be cancelled for a variety of reasons, including current or anticipated road conditions and/or weather. A bus cancellation can apply to one route, one community, or the whole division. When buses are cancelled, regular classes are still held and students who normally take the bus to school are not expected to attend. All students who do not normally take the bus to school are expected to attend, *if it is safe for them to do so*.

Ultimately it is up to the parent to determine whether or not their child attends school that day. As stated in the AP, "...parents must use their own discretion in sending their child(ren) to school." Safety comes first; if it is unsafe to transport your children to school, please let the school know they will not be in attendance that day.

Q: But if I don't bring my child to school, does that mean they will fall behind on academics because regular classes are proceeding?

A: While regular classes are proceeding, teachers have discretion to adjust the content they are covering based on the number of students in attendance. They may decide to focus on review or enrichment activities instead of introducing new material, for instance. This is the same discretion they would exercise on any day when attendance is lower than usual whether it's due to bus cancellations, illness or any other reason that may keep large number of students out of the classroom. If you are concerned about your child missing school work, please contact your child's teacher or school.

Q: What's the difference between buses being cancelled and classes being cancelled? I thought that's the same thing.

A: Like bus cancellations, class cancellations can affect one school, one community or the whole division. If



**IS IT A
SNOW
DAY?**

Snow days are very rare in our division.

Know the difference:

- Buses are cancelled**
Regular classes are still held.
- Classes are cancelled**
Regular classes are **not** held but schools remain open. A classic snow day.
- Schools are closed**
An emergency situation - staff and students should stay at home.

classes are cancelled, we do not expect any students to attend school that day. Our schools remain open in case there are students that show up, but we do not proceed with regular classes. This is what people think of as a "snow day."

Class cancellations happen rarely as the criteria is that classes will be cancelled when the Wind Chill exceeds -45 degrees Celsius or the outside air temperature measures -40 degrees Celsius.

Q: Do you ever just close schools?

A: School closures happen only in rare circumstances when something has happened at a school that makes it unsafe for students or staff to be at school. Examples include extended power outages, water outages or community emergencies (like the Fort McMurray wildfires).

Q: How will I know when buses or classes are cancelled or schools are closed?

A: If buses are cancelled you may receive a call from your bus driver. Bus information is also available on our website - nlsd.ab.ca - and on our NLSD-2-GO app (available for Apple and Android devices).

School Messenger service also allows us to contact parents through phone, email, or text message. We also post major bus cancellations, class cancellations and school closures on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us what you think of the two draft calendars for the 2018-2019 school year.

Calendars and feedback options are available on the division's website, nlsd.ab.ca



Calendar feedback due by February 16

Thank you to everyone who has already provided feedback on the two draft 2018-2019 School Calendars that are under consideration by the Board of Trustees. We have received an amazing response to our request for input from our stakeholders and there have been many interesting comments and suggestions for us to discuss for this year and future school years.

If you have not already had a chance to do so, both calendars are available for review in the [Latest News](#) section of our website:

[Calendar A](#)

[Calendar B](#)

Let us know what you like about each calendar, what you don't like and what recommendations you have. To share your thoughts, please send an email to feedback.nlsd@nlsd.ab.ca before February 16, 2018.

The Board of Trustees will review the feedback received and the draft calendars at its February 28 Board meeting in Bonnyville. We will share the final 2018-2019 school calendar with all stakeholders once it is approved by the Board.

Accountability Pillar surveys are out

If you have a student in grade 4, 7, or 10 (or grades 4-12 at our smaller schools), you may have received a survey from Alberta Education in the mail recently. This survey is an important opportunity for parents to provide input into the education system.

Some of the topics covered by the survey include the quality of education your child is receiving, opportunities to learn about a variety of topics, safe and caring schools, citizenship, preparing students for the world of work, and whether or not you feel your school has improved over the past three years.

The completed surveys are analyzed by Alberta Education and are used to develop Accountability Pillars for each school and school jurisdiction. In addition to the results of the surveys done by parents, students and staff, the Accountability Pillar also looks at dropout rates, high school completion rates and student results on Provincial Achievement Tests and Provincial Diploma Exams.

Once we receive our results, they are studied at the school and division level.

Have a say in your child's learning

- Look for a letter from Alberta Education
- Fill out the 2018 Accountability Pillar Survey
- Make your voice heard




Each school uses the results as they review their school plans for the current year and develop their new school plans for the following year. At the division level, the results are also used to assess how well we have met our goals and what areas we may need to focus on more intently.

Details about the surveys, the Accountability Pillar and how to obtain results are available on the [Alberta Education](#) website.

School Messenger updates

In January we made some changes to School Messenger to improve the user experience for our parents and staff.

As a result, we are running our text opt-in campaign. If you want to receive text message updates (including attendance notifications) from your child's school, please text Y to 978-338.

Parents who want to set their message preferences can do so by creating an account on go.schoolmessenger.ca or by downloading the School Messenger App. If you register by using the same email address that the school has on file for you, you will be able to set your preferences.

If, for example, you only want to

Northern Lights Public Schools

School Messenger Text Alert Opt-in

Reply Y to this text message from 978-338



receive attendance notifications by text message, you can do that online or through the app. The only restriction is that you must have one contact method for attendance and one for emergency notifications (like class cancellations or school closures). The rest are completely customizable by you.

Need to add contact information or update what's there? Please call your child's school.