

Process Regarding Bus Cancellation

Student safety is the primary concern of the Valhalla School Foundation (VSF). Everyone involved with student transportation at Valhalla recognizes this responsibility and works to ensure the safe transportation of all Valhalla Community School (VCS) students year round. As you know, winter in Northwestern Alberta can bring inclement and extreme weather conditions. Severe cold, icy and snowy road conditions and reduced visibility all present challenges to transporting students in winter.

While the Valhalla administration recognizes the importance of getting students to school for their instructional time, the decision to cancel buses is not made lightly. A great deal of thought and energy is involved in this process our primary concern is always student safety.

Valhalla School Foundation board policy states that operation of school buses will be suspended on the days when the temperature is equal to, or colder than -40 C. As we all know, temperatures can vary several degrees within just a small area. Currently, temperature readings are taken from the Transportation Director's (TD) home and the AMA camera 43-02, which is on highway 43 east of junction 723. This AMA site is the same site Peace Wapiti School Division (PWSD) uses to determine bus cancellation for their Beaverlodge school area, which encompasses the Valhalla, Hythe, Elsworth and Wembley areas.

On days when road conditions are a concern, the TD will drive parts of all four VCS bus routes. This begins between 4:30 and 5:00 am. The TD may discuss conditions with the VCS bus drivers, other knowledgeable individuals in the area, and/or the County of GP foreman for our area. Between 6:00am and 6:30am, the TD will call the VCS superintendent to inform and discuss conditions in the area and a decision will be made whether to run buses or cancel buses for that day. Once a decision has been reached to cancel buses, the TD informs all VCS bus drivers, the school principal, the radio stations, and the VCS webmaster of the bus cancellation. Every effort is made to have bus cancellations announced by 7:00 am.

We are a separate school jurisdiction from PWSD. The decision for PWSD to suspend their buses is their responsibility. The decision to suspend the VCS buses is the responsibility of the Superintendent of VCS and its Transportation Director.

Finally and most importantly, the VSF leaves the decision of bus ridership to its parents. If parents have concerns about their area of a bus route, they have the right to decide not to place their child on the bus. As always, we ask parents to please let your driver or TD know if your child will not be on the bus. This helps make your driver aware of possible changing road conditions in your area and changes in their bus route.

Our goal is to provide a safe and reliable transportation service to support our parents in getting their children to school. Thank you for your partnership in making our school's transportation as safe and efficient as possible.