

- You may decide that in the interests of safety it is appropriate to send pupils home early. You may also be contacted by your school transport provider suggesting that an early departure is advisable. You may wish to take account of these representations in determining an appropriate course of action.
- If you decide to close the school early contact your school transport provider immediately. It is possible that due to other commitments your school transport provider may not be able to provide an early service. If this is the case, contact should be made with the Transport Section for advice. In such eventualities, Schools should be prepared to liaise with parents in relation to facilitating their own child's homeward journey.
- In the case of primary school children, you must make sure that there will be a responsible adult available to supervise them at home.
- In the case of post-primary pupils it may be impractical to contact all parents. You must however be satisfied that no child will be put at risk as a result of an early departure.
- Please remember that during periods of severe weather school transport providers cannot guarantee that all routes will be covered.

Contact Details

SAFE SCHOOL TRANSPORT Education Authority

Armagh Office

Tel: 028 3751 2391

Ballymena Office

Tel: 028 2566 1370

Belfast Office

Tel: 028 9078 4350

Dundonald Office

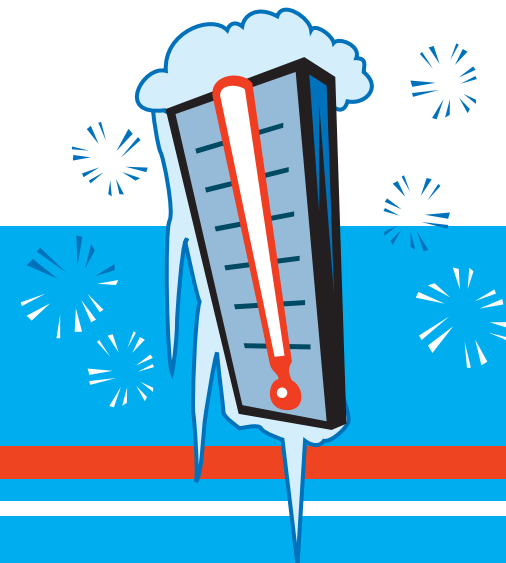
Tel: 028 9056 6200

Omagh Office

Tel: 028 8241 1411

SAFE SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Provision of school transport
services during severe weather

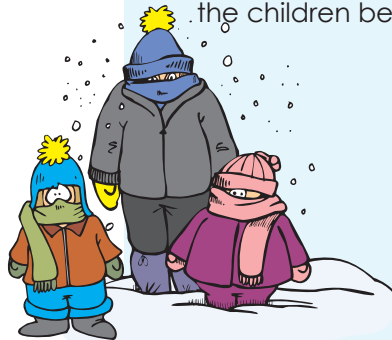


Advice for Parents, Contractors and Schools

In periods of bad weather it is necessary to take extra precautions to ensure that the safety of pupils is not compromised. It is not possible to provide precise instructions to cover every eventuality; the following notes reflect "good practice" which should, if followed, ensure children's safety.

PARENTS

- Please remember that there may be occasions when it is not possible to operate the morning school transport journey, or the journey may operate late. You are responsible for your child's/ children's safety until they are on the school bus or taxi.
- Parents should ensure their children know what to do if transport provision is late or does not arrive and, if required, have suitable alternative arrangements in place to ensure the safe transportation of their children to and from school. During periods of severe weather school transport providers will only operate where it is safe to do so and your child/children may be required to use a different bus stop. If the morning school transport journey does not operate and you decide to take your own children to school, then you must also be prepared to collect them at the end of the school day if school transport is still unavailable.
- There may be circumstances when the school Principal decides it is necessary for children to be sent home from school early. It is essential that the school is able to contact you or a nominated responsible person at short notice. Please make sure that the school has up-to-date contact information.
- There may be circumstances where transport is not available for the afternoon journey, in which case you will be contacted by the school. In such eventualities you will be required to make alternative transport provision for your child/children.



CONTRACTORS

- Children's safety is of paramount importance. Before starting a morning journey, check the prevailing weather conditions for the area in which you operate. You must satisfy yourself that it is safe to operate.
- It is essential for drivers to have a mobile phone or radio available.
- Make sure that all drivers are aware of emergency contact numbers for your base, schools and Education Authority Transport Section. If there are problems the school and Education Authority Transport Section must be informed immediately.
- If you are unable to complete the route and have to take children home you must make sure that they are properly supervised before you leave them. If you have any doubts then keep the children with you and contact either the school or Education Authority Transport Section straight away. You should advise the school as soon as possible that children will not be attending.
- If weather conditions are poor it is wise to ensure that, in the morning, there is a responsible person at school to receive the children before you depart.

- If you provide a connecting service, do not leave children unsupervised unless you are sure that the service which they will connect with is also operating. In some cases waiting longer for the connecting service will affect other school journeys normally operated by the same vehicle. In these circumstances you should aim to contact the parents of those children whose journey will be delayed, or the Education Authority Transport Section if this is not possible.
- You should continue to monitor the weather during the day. If the weather deteriorates you may decide it is necessary for you to provide transport before the scheduled time. You must liaise with the school and agree an appropriate course of action with them.

Please remember that the final decision rests with the school Principal. Where a service carries pupils from more than one school, it is your responsibility to ensure that each school is aware of what is proposed.

