

## **Brockville 50+ Activity Centre Winter Weather Policy**

A weather event that affects the operation of the Activity Centre (A.C.) is usually one that is sufficiently severe to cause area bus cancellations. Our current inclement weather policy is tethered to this criterion, and many leaders are happy with this arrangement. However, a number of leaders who wish to control the choice to hold their activity if the weather permits them to get to the Centre (or one of its satellites) have operated on this leader-driven option quite successfully. It is desirable, therefore, to offer some policy options in order to accommodate the wishes of our leaders and our members.

### **Option One**

Option One is similar to the blanket policy for inclement weather that the A.C. has used for the past few years. Classes will be cancelled and the office closed if the area school buses are cancelled due to a severe weather event (usually snow or freezing rain). However, there is one major change. Previously, the cancellation of buses triggered an e-mail message from our office to the effect that classes at the A.C. were cancelled and the office closed. In this new policy option, there will not be an e-mail message from the office regarding the cancellation of buses and the cancellation of classes and office closure. The onus will be on leaders and members to be aware of the probability of inclement weather, and to listen for, or to call, or to perform a website check, using the contact information referenced below regarding bus cancellations.

School bus cancellations are announced on local radio stations (CFJR: 104.9; CBC Ottawa: 91.5). The phone number to call regarding cancellations is 1-866-629-0629. The status of buses can also be checked by accessing the STEO website [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca).

## Option Two

This option provides a leader-controlled decision to hold or to cancel their classes. This option may take different forms:

- a) Some leaders choose to proceed to their activity if, in their judgment, it is safe to do so. Class members are to assume the class is on unless they receive an e-mail to the contrary.
- b) Some leaders choose to proceed to their activity if, in their judgment, it is safe to do so, and they send out an e-mail to all class members to inform of their decision to offer the class.
- c) Some leaders choose to proceed to their activity if, in their judgment, it is safe to do so, but do not wish (or are unable) to contact class members of their intention.

## Considerations Relating to Weather Policy Options

- a) Option one is the preferred choice of many leaders. The course of action is straightforward and clear. No buses; no classes. This also avoids the frustration of arriving at the A.C. to find the church is closed.
- b) Option one has resulted in some confusion at times at the WSUC site. The problems stem from several factors. First, some classes (SLIE, Tai Chi) start before the office opens. These are usually large classes and there is more chance that some members may miss the bus cancellation announcement. Second, some members are unaware or confused about the weather closure policy. Third, there can be wide variances in weather over our area; the weather in Brockville area may be fine and so members leave for the activity without thought of a possible closure.
- c) Option Two allows leaders to base their decision to run or to cancel their activity on the local weather. They have control of their course of action. Bus cancellation decisions are made for a large geographical area within which weather conditions may vary widely. Also, the morning weather may be nasty, but conditions may improve dramatically which allow later classes to be offered. This is particularly true of freezing rain. Our off-site leaders have established clear weather cancellation policies with their classes and have experienced few problems. This may be partly due to size (small) and make-up (tight knit) of these groups.

d) Option Two enables leaders to make their own decision to hold or cancel their activity. However, class members must decide whether or not they feel it is safe for them to attend. People's risk/confidence levels in regard to driving in adverse conditions vary. Leaders are not making the decision to travel for their class members; they are only saying that they will be there if any members wish to attend.

e) Designated Alternate Leaders. Some classes may have a designated alternate leader who is prepared to lead the activity in the absence of the course leader. If the leader is absent for some reason, an alternate can enable the activity to continue as usual by performing the duties normally looked after by the leader. If a class has a designated alternate leader, and is governed by Option Two for severe weather, then in the absence of the leader, the alternate may take attendance, supervise equipment set-up and take-down or perform any other duties usually looked after by or shared with the leader. Alternate leaders must be designated as such to the Activity Director, to the Office and to the class members. Alternate leaders will be listed on the Activity Schedule.

A leadership tandem is not possible when the leader is the principal person needed to teach, to provide materials and to manage and direct the class. Also, an alternate is not needed when Option One governs whether the activity runs or is cancelled due to weather conditions. If severe weather causes the school buses to be cancelled, then the Option One action is that the class is cancelled.

f) The WSUC site is open as long as Trevor is able to clear the walkways. Although the church seldom closes, this eventuality must be kept in mind, and the church reserves the right to remain closed. Also, Trevor may leave the building locked if he is outside snow blowing walkways. There is the possibility that the walkways may not be cleared and salted before the first morning classes and this can pose a hazard to our members. Usually the church closure will be occasioned by very nasty weather which in all probability will have caused leaders to cancel their activities.

g) Clear communication is vital between the leaders and their class members. The leaders must inform their classes of the inclement weather option they will use. This may involve a good deal of repetition to achieve full comprehension by all participants. The weather policy will have to be clearly reviewed with leaders. The office will no longer be the key communicator to individual classes regarding their status.

h) Some leaders do not want the responsibility for informing class members that they are travelling to class in spite of inclement weather. It is crucial for these leaders to communicate this to their classes, emphasizing that they will travel to class unless the weather is too forbidding.

i) It is desirable that all leaders be provided with contact lists which they can use to inform their class members of their intention to hold or cancel their classes. Some leaders routinely contact class members if they intend to cancel class.

ATTACHMENT FLOWCHART

