



You are here: [School Transport \(http://www.buseireann.ie/inner.php?id=257\)](http://www.buseireann.ie/inner.php?id=257)
| [Status Red Weather Warnings \(inner.php?id=424\)](http://www.buseireann.ie/inner.php?id=424)

Status Red Weather Warnings

STATUS RED WEATHER WARNINGS – SERVICES PROVIDED BY BUS ÉIREANN UNDER THE SCHOOL TRANSPORT SCHEMES BY BUS ÉIREANN SCHOOL BUSES AND CONTRACTORS

In developing this policy, account was taken of the 'Be Winter Ready' booklet produced by the [Office of Emergency Planning \(https://emergencyplanning.ie/\)](https://emergencyplanning.ie/) and developed in association with other organisations including the [Department of Education & Skills \(http://www.education.ie/en/\)](http://www.education.ie/en/), the [RSA \(http://www.rsa.ie/\)](http://www.rsa.ie/), [An Garda Síochána \(http://www.garda.ie/\)](http://www.garda.ie/), the [Health & Safety Authority \(http://www.hsa.ie/eng/\)](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/), and [Met Éireann \(http://www.met.ie/\)](http://www.met.ie/).

The weather can be very dangerous during winter and on occasion exceptionally intense meteorological phenomena have been forecast by Met Éireann. In these circumstances major damage and accidents are considered likely, with a possible threat to life and limb, over a wide area.

When a Status Red Weather Warning is announced it is important that everyone stays informed about expected meteorological conditions and risks, and follows instructions and any advice given by the authorities.

Weather warnings are intended to protect the lives and livelihoods of all of the nation's citizens. **A Status Red Weather Warning is the most severe weather warning and implores all citizens to take appropriate action in order to protect themselves from the anticipated conditions.**

Met Éireann recommends that in the event of a Status Red Weather Warning families "take action to protect themselves and/or their properties; this could be by moving their families out of the danger zone temporarily; by staying indoors; or by other specific actions aimed at mitigating the effects of the weather conditions".

Following this advice means children should not be exposed to such weather conditions to travel to or from school.

Any decision to cancel school transport services due to severe weather conditions is taken in the interest of child safety, having assessed risks to the safe operation of services and the safety of children carried. The decision must and will be consistent with the spirit and intention of a Status Red Weather Warning.

On the rare occasion that Met Éireann declares a Status Red Weather Warning, the following operating policy will apply:

Status Red Weather Warning on a National Scale:

All services provided by Bus Éireann under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes will be cancelled in the affected area if a Status Red warning is announced for all or part of a given day*.

Operating decisions as to whether a service should operate or not when a Status Red Weather Warning is announced cannot be left open to local interpretation because this could mean the approach being taken would not be universal. This would lead to confusion for parents/guardians, and could thereby increase risk to child safety.

Similarly, the nature of the anticipated severe weather, whether it is a wind or ice or rain event for example, cannot have a bearing because this too runs the risk of a less than consistent approach being adopted locally, with potentially grave implications.

The policy adopted in respect of services provided by Bus Éireann under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes in the event of a Status Red Weather Warning must be universally applied and easily understood by the general public and school authorities alike – ‘Status Red Warning for your area Means NO Bus Éireann School Transport Service’ is automatically understood by all.

All schools served in the affected area will be notified accordingly.

This approach will apply irrespective of whether individual schools decide to open or not – the set of conditions that influence the decision to operate a school transport service may be different from those that govern the decision to open a school building.

In general school bus services will not be available to bring children into school for a delayed class commencement later than normal class time (i.e. 11am start).

*In the event that a Status Red warning in place in the morning is downgraded at or before noon, services – which do not operate in the morning - will operate as normal at school closing time.

If the Status Red warning is not downgraded until afternoon or later in the evening we will endeavour, where possible, and with the assistance of emergency services if necessary, to bring children home. In these circumstances Bus Éireann will keep schools and media informed of school transport service developments.

Status Red Weather Warning on a Regional or Local Basis:

All services provided by Bus Éireann under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes in the affected area only will be cancelled if a Status Red warning is announced for all or part of a given day*.

This approach will be implemented irrespective of whether individual schools decide to open or not – the approach will be universal within the affected area.

Where the weather warning identifies a county affected **all services provided by Bus Éireann under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes that operate in or serve schools in the affected county** will be automatically cancelled.

This will include school transport services that may operate predominantly in a neighbouring unaffected county i.e. if the school is located in a county subject to a Status Red Weather Warning the service will not operate regardless of where it comes from. Equally, if a school transport service starts in a county subject to a Status Red Weather Warning but ends in an unaffected county the service will also be cancelled.

In the event that the Met Éireann warning is vague in terms of the affected area (i.e. North Leinster, or parts of a county), the local School Transport Office/School Transport Inspector will make the determination on the services to be cancelled locally.

In these circumstances: Services will be cancelled on a per school basis – either all or no services to a given school will operate. The decision will be an operational matter at the sole discretion of Bus Éireann.

- All affected schools will be notified accordingly.

- In general school bus services will not be available to bring children into school for a delayed class commencement later than normal class time (i.e. 11am start).

*In the event that a Status Red warning in place in the morning is downgraded at or before noon, services – which do not operate in the morning - will operate as normal at school closing time.

If the Status Red warning is not downgraded until afternoon or later in the evening we will endeavour, where possible, and with the assistance of emergency services if necessary, to bring children home. In line with advice outlined in the 'Be Winter Ready' booklet, parents are advised to keep in touch with local schools during incidents of severe weather and as conditions improve may decide to undertake the journey to the school to collect children, a decision which can be made in conjunction with the school authorities and subject to the prevailing weather conditions. In these circumstances Bus Éireann will keep schools and media informed of school transport service developments.

In the event a Status Red Weather Warning is imposed at short notice during class time:

In circumstances where a Status Red Weather Warning related to wind is issued when class is already underway with students and staff present, and a decision is made on health and safety grounds for students to remain on the school premises, the 'Be Winter Ready' booklet outlines that schools are required to plan to accommodate students and staff within the school while awaiting an improvement in the weather.

In the event that a Status Red warning in place in the morning is downgraded at or before noon, services will operate as normal at school closing time.

If the Status Red warning is not downgraded until afternoon or later in the evening we will endeavour, where possible, and with the assistance of emergency services if necessary, to bring children home.

Communicating this Policy:

This policy is being outlined in advance so that school authorities and parents are aware of the implications of a Status Red Weather Warning for services provided by Bus Éireann under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes.

A Status Red weather warning automatically means all school transport services in the affected area are cancelled while the warning is in effect. Weather warnings are carried on all national and local news bulletins.

In line with advice outlined in the 'Be Winter Ready' booklet, schools are encouraged to advise parents/guardians of exceptional measures using their group text messaging facilities as and when the situation arises.

BÉ Press Office will inform national and local media, update BÉ website, and coordinate with the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning as necessary.

Related Links

- [Office of Emergency Planning \(https://emergencyplanning.ie/\)](https://emergencyplanning.ie/)
- [Department of Education & Skills \(http://www.education.ie/en/\)](http://www.education.ie/en/)
- [RSA \(http://www.rsa.ie/\)](http://www.rsa.ie/)
- [An Garda Síochána \(http://www.garda.ie/\)](http://www.garda.ie/)
- [Health & Safety Authority \(http://www.hsa.ie/eng/\)](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/)
- [Met Éireann \(http://www.met.ie/\)](http://www.met.ie/)