

Weather or Other Emergency Situations Procedures for NLSA Validation Teams

Question: Who is responsible for the decision to postpone a National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) school visit should there be hazardous road conditions and/or should team members decline to make the trip out of concern for poor road conditions and safety?

Answer:

- The Team Captain stays informed of potential weather or emergency situations that may impact the school visit. The Team Captain is encouraged to maintain contact with the school/system to be aware of local conditions.
- The Team Captain contacts the District Education Executive and NLSA Commissioner by email or phone to decide to postpone, reschedule or delay the start of the visit. The Education Executive and/or District Commissioner will work with the school/system and Team Captain to make the final decision regarding the school visit.
- If the Team Captain is unable to reach the Education Executive and/or District Commissioner, he/she will need to make this decision in conjunction with the school/system administrator.
- The Team Captain will communicate with the validation team members to keep them informed of the decision and the next steps. It is recommended that Team Captain ensure that they have the appropriate cell phone contacts for their team members in addition to school/system contact information.

Question: Can the school/system collaborate with the Team Captain to adjust the schedule or make modifications to the team's activities should schools close during part of the school visit or travel become hazardous due to weather conditions?

Answer:

- The Team Captain is authorized to adjust the schedule as necessary to conduct the visit, keeping in mind that the quality of the school visit and maintaining the integrity of the accreditation protocol are important.
- Examples of modifications include the following:
 - Use of conference call or video conferencing to conduct interviews with stakeholder groups.
 - Conducting interviews at the hotel location if the school is closed.
 - Delaying the start time of the school visit by a few hours to allow for travel situations and adjusting the schedule accordingly.
 - Delaying the Exit Report so that school visits, interviews, and other activities take place to ensure a quality review.
 - Never complete a Validation Team Report or conduct the concluding meeting on a school visit until an on-site visit is completed and the team has some way to collaborate on all the findings. The exit meeting with the institution may have to be completed via video or conference call at a later date.

Question: Who pays for the costs incurred when a school visit must be canceled and rescheduled?

Answer:

- The school/system is responsible for all costs related to NLSA Validation Visits.
- Flight reservations, if applicable, and hotel reservations may need to be rebooked if a school visit is postponed and rescheduled. Rescheduling a school visit is very expensive, especially when flights are involved. If the team is on-site, the interviews and review of evidence can usually be completed, and observations can be conducted through the direction of NLSA at a later time.
- The school/ system is responsible for the cost of changes due to extenuating circumstances that are outside the control of NLSA, such as bad weather and emergency situations.

Question: Who is responsible for contacting team members?

Answer:

- The Team Captain must contact team members regarding any cancellation or delay of the school visit. This may be done via email, phone or text message. Team Captains are strongly encouraged to be proactive in alerting team members to any potential delays or postponements.
- In case of rescheduled school visits, the Team Captain will work with the District Education Executive and District Commissioner to update the NLSA National Office regarding revised visit dates and in replacing team members who may be unavailable for the rescheduled visit dates.