

Inclement Weather and School Closing Information

Early morning weather conditions created by floods, severe ice, snowstorms, or other weather related emergencies sometimes make it necessary to close schools. In some instances, weather and street conditions improve later in the morning so that schools can be opened two hours later than normal.

The decision to close school or delay school time rests with the Superintendent of Schools after close coordination with the Associate Superintendent of Student Support. During inclement weather, our facilities and transportation supervisory personnel inspect the streets and communicate with Columbia County's Emergency Services. The Superintendent's Office is in constant communication and receives updated weather and road conditions in our area from the Columbia County's Emergency Management Services Office. Factors that are considered when making the decision to close schools:

Weather ~ Does the weather forecast indicate that conditions could become hazardous?

Roads ~ Are road conditions safe for cars and buses?

Buildings ~ Is the condition of the school building safe for students and staff? Do school buildings have power, heat or air?

Buses ~ Is the school bus fleet operable?

Threat Alerts ~ Do public safety officials recommend that schools be closed?

The safety of all Columbia County children is our primary concern and we are prepared for three scenarios in the event of inclement weather.

School Closing (Must be made up by the end of the school year):

- The decision to close schools will be made by public announcement the previous night. If a closing decision cannot be made at that time, a delayed opening will be implemented until a final decision can be made.
- Before/After school programs at the closed schools will be cancelled and closed.
- All activities scheduled in district facilities are cancelled.
- In-district sport events and team practices are postponed.
- Central office employees will report for business unless specifically announced otherwise.

Delayed Opening:

- When weather conditions are predicted to cause unsafe travel to school, a two hour delayed school opening announcement will be made to the public, preferably the night before. The decision of opening or closing schools will be made the next morning and local media outlets will be notified.
- Before school programs at the closed schools will be cancelled.
- Buses will pick up students about two hours later than normal. Special education buses

will follow pre-arranged schedules as determined with individual parents/guardians.

- Afternoon dismissal times will be the same as usual for all schools unless otherwise announced.
- School administrators will report to school as normal to staff telephones and receive students.

Early Dismissal:

- If serious storm conditions or other emergency situations develop during the day, the district will monitor the situation and advise affected schools and the transportation department as soon as possible, of a decision to dismiss school early. When this decision is made, this information will be posted on this website and sent to the media as soon as possible.
- Horizon students and field trip buses should return students to their home school immediately upon notice.
- The Superintendent's Office, the Transportation Office, and Maintenance/Fleet Maintenance Offices will remain open and staffed until all students have been accounted for and their safety assured.
- Administrators should remain at school until all buses have delivered the last student home.

IMPORTANT

In the event that weather conditions require an early school closing, we are asking you to develop an emergency plan with your child.

- Review the bus number and the bus driver's name so that your child knows what bus to ride.
- Decide the plan of action when your child gets off the bus.
- Make sure your child knows your home address and phone numbers of you and your designated emergency contact.
- If your child normally walks home from school, you should have an emergency procedure for your child and school in the event of an early dismissal.

When snowy or icy weather hits, please tune to any radio or television station for information regarding school closures or delayed openings.