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## Washington County Schools Inclement Weather Procedure -- School Delay/Closure Decisions

As a reminder to all Washington County citizens, Washington County Schools uses multiple means of communication to announce school closings and/or any change of the status of our schools for inclement weather or any other emergency which presents a threat to the safety of students, staff members or school property.

If Washington County receives inclement weather overnight that does or is reasonably expected to create hazardous conditions, the WCDE inclement weather team, which includes the Superintendent, Chief Operations Officer, members of the WCDE transportation department, and other district supervisors, will begin gathering the latest available information by monitoring and/or contacting the following:

- National Weather Service
- Washington County Office of Emergency Management
- Washington County Highway Department
- Tennessee Department of Transportation
- Washington County Sheriff's Department
- Other School Systems - Upper East TN
- Local Media Sources for weather information
- Regional TV Media Sources for weather information:  
**TV:** WCYB Channel 5, WJHL Channel 11; **Radio:** WQUT 101.5, WXBQ 96.9

The Inclement Weather Team will deliberately and directly check roads across the county to assess driving conditions and report the conditions to the Superintendent.

Per Washington County Board of Education Policy 1.8011, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to close schools in the event of hazardous weather or any other emergency which presents a threat to the safety of students, staff members or school property. As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Superintendent will initiate communications via district resources as well as notify local and regional public media to share any announcements. Based on the input and insight of many, the Superintendent makes the final decision to dismiss school.

A final decision will be made as early as possible. The school system strives to make closure or delay announcements the night before (by/before 7:00 PM), if credible information is available. In the event an early morning decision is necessary, the district will not begin notifying parents until 6:00 AM.

Once a decision is made that results in a change in the status of schools (e.g., closing, delay, early dismissal, etc.), the Superintendent and team will notify media sources and activate the school system's text messaging service and mass communication system BrightArrow (email and/or voice call) to all parents, faculty, and staff using the primary contact information (phone numbers and emails) listed in PowerSchool. Until or unless a change in the status of schools is reported, schools and associated services should be assumed to OPEN at the regular time. Note that voice calls will only be utilized if a decision is made before 7:00 PM the night before any closure or delay is necessary. Otherwise, direct communications from WCS of any changes will be via text and/or emails.

**The WCDE website ([www.wcde.org](http://www.wcde.org)) and official Twitter page (@WCDE\_TN) will be updated with the information following any decision. In addition, Tri-Cities TV and Radio stations will be contacted to report any closings, delays, or early dismissals. In all cases, the outlets directly managed by WCDE and our local media broadcast partners will be the official and most current information (BrightArrow contacts; WCDE website; WCDE social media; WJHL; WCYB; and Cumulus Radio stations).**

#### DELAYED OPENINGS

When schools open on a delayed start time, it simply means the official start time for each school will be delayed by the amount of time indicated by the announced delay. For example, if there is an announced "two (2) hour delay", your school that normally begins at 8:00 AM would begin at 10:00 a.m.

#### EARLY DISMISSALS

When conditions and/or circumstances develop that require an early dismissal of schools, the decision will be communicated via all school system mass communication systems (BrightArrow; WCDE website; WCDE social media) as soon as possible. The school system will always strive to provide as much lead time as possible prior to any release for parents to make arrangements, whenever possible.

#### BUS ROUTE INFORMATION

Buses will run when schools are open unless the school system notifies parents otherwise. The amount of time indicated for the announced delay or an early dismissal also applies to the normal bus stop times. For example, if a student's bus normally arrives at the designated bus stop at 6:15 AM each morning, the adjusted pick-up time if a two (2) hour delay is announced would be 8:15 AM.

#### BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

For parents that utilize the WCDE School Age Child Care (SACC) program, a snow day plan will be communicated by the program director. LEAPS and 21st Century Programs will be canceled when schools are closed. Any other necessary changes in the status of these programs will be communicated to the participating families by the school-based program director and/or the district Extended Learning Programs coordinator.