

INSTRUCTION: Schedules

Emergency Closures, Delays, and Cancellations

I. Purpose

- A. In Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), the decision to close schools or to delay the instructional day shall be made by the Superintendent. The decision is based on student safety and the ability to effectively deliver the educational program and any other consideration deemed relevant by the Superintendent. This Rule provides guidelines for the effective management of schools and related activities when a decision has been made to close a school or delay opening as the result of inclement weather or other emergencies.

II. Process

- A. Inclement Weather Closings and Delays
1. The Director of the Office of Transportation (Transportation) shall be responsible for recommending to the Superintendent that individual schools or all schools be closed due to inclement weather.
 2. The Department of Physical Facilities will provide on-site assessment regarding the conditions of school buildings and grounds.
- B. School Closings in the Event of Building System Failure
1. In the event of a building system failure (including, but not limited to, electric, plumbing, water, gas), the school principal shall follow the protocols outlined in the *Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide*.
 2. The Executive Director of the Department of Physical Facilities (Facilities) shall be responsible for assessing the conditions and making a recommendation to the CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER [Deputy Superintendent] or Chief of Staff on whether a school or schools should be closed.
 3. The CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER [Deputy Superintendent] or Chief of Staff will consult with the Superintendent, who will decide whether to close a school or schools.
 - a. The CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER [Deputy Superintendent] or the Chief of Staff will notify [the Director of] Transportation of any decisions to close or delay opening of any school(s).

- C. Transportation will coordinate directly with the affected school or schools to establish dismissal times and procedures.

III. Announcements

- A. Transportation is responsible for initiating all school closing announcements, including systemwide and media notices.
 - 1. School closings will be:
 - a. Posted on the school system's Web page;
 - b. Placed on the school system's information telephone line (410-887-5555) and the BCPS Education Channel; and
 - c. Provided to local radio and television stations.
 - 2. Use of a systemwide Connect-Ed message may be generated, as determined by the Superintendent.
- B. Whenever possible, morning decisions to close or delay school will be made by 5:30 a.m. and communicated to media outlets.
- C. If schools are closing one or two hours early, whenever possible, the announcement will usually be made by 10:30 a.m.
- D. If schools must close three hours early, whenever possible, the announcement will usually be made by 10:00 a.m.

IV. Guidelines

- A. Closing Schools for the Day for Inclement Weather – When inclement weather requires that all schools be closed, the closures will affect programs as follows:
 - 1. All before- and after-school activities and school-sponsored events are cancelled;
 - 2. Evening high school classes are cancelled;
 - 3. All before- and after-school child care programs are cancelled;
 - 4. All BCPS school-based staff meetings and professional development activities scheduled in schools are cancelled;
 - 5. All planned use of facilities and grounds by non-BCPS organizations are cancelled;

6. Student participation in state and regional events scheduled outside of BCPS facilities:
 - a. The principal shall contact his/her respective assistant superintendent and/or department head in charge of the activity to determine whether students will participate in these approved activities.
 - b. The assistant superintendent or department head is responsible for contacting the Superintendent to obtain approval for participation in the event.

- B. Delayed School Openings – If weather conditions require a delayed opening of one or more hours, the delays will affect programs as follows:
 1. Morning pre-kindergarten classes are cancelled;
 2. All before-school child care programs are cancelled;
 3. All morning BCPS staff meetings and professional development activities scheduled in the school are cancelled;
 4. After-school activities and events will not be affected by a delayed opening.

- C. Early Dismissal due to Inclement Weather – If weather conditions require an early dismissal of one or more hours, the closures will affect programs as follows:
 1. Afternoon pre-kindergarten classes are cancelled;
 2. Evening high school classes are cancelled;
 3. All after-school child care programs are cancelled;
 4. All BCPS staff meetings and professional development activities scheduled in schools are cancelled;
 5. All after-school activities and school-sponsored events are cancelled;
 6. All planned use of facilities by non-BCPS organizations are cancelled;
 7. Student participation in state and regional events scheduled outside of BCPS facilities:
 - a. The principal shall contact the office head in charge of the activity to determine whether students will participate in these approved activities.
 - b. The office head in charge of the activity is responsible for conferring with his/her assistant superintendent or executive director and for making a recommendation on whether the school system will participate in the event.

- c. The assistant superintendent or executive director is responsible for contacting the Superintendent to obtain approval for participation in the event. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

D. Early Dismissal due to Extreme Heat

- 1. If a school(s) OR ALL SCHOOLS ARE [is] dismissed one or more hours early due to extreme heat, the closures will affect programs scheduled in only those NON-AIR CONDITIONED [affected] school(s) as follows.[:]
 - a. [1.] Afternoon pre-kindergarten classes are cancelled;
 - b. [2.] Evening high school classes are cancelled;
 - c. [3.] All after-school child care programs are cancelled;
 - d. [4.] All BCPS staff meetings and professional development activities scheduled in the school are cancelled;
 - e. [5.] The principal will consult with the Office of Athletics to determine whether BCPS-sponsored athletic events shall be cancelled;
 - f. [6.] All planned use of facilities by outside organizations shall be cancelled, EXCEPT WHEN THE PLANNED USE OF A SCHOOL'S FACILITIES IS SCHEDULED BY THE BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS, WHEN THE FOLLOWING SHALL APPLY:
 - (1) [a.] The principal will consult with the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks to determine whether RECREATION AND PARKS ACTIVITIES [athletic events] scheduled in the school [’s gymnasium] or on its athletic fields should be cancelled.
- 2. IN THOSE SCHOOLS THAT ARE AIR CONDITIONED, DEFINED AS A SCHOOL WITH A CENTRAL CHILLED WATER SYSTEM DESIGNED TO COOL THE MAJOR PORTIONS OF THE SCHOOL, ALL ACTIVITIES WILL CONTINUE AS SCHEDULED, EXCEPT FOR THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. AFTERNOON PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.

3. CLOSURES UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH DO NOT AFFECT PROGRAMS OR MEETINGS SCHEDULED IN ANY OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES.
- E. School Closings Resulting from a Building System Failure or Other Emergency Event
1. If an individual school is closed for the entire day or dismissed early because of a building system failure or other emergency event, the closures will affect scheduled activities as follows:
 - a. All school-sponsored activities and non-school related events scheduled in the affected building are cancelled.
 - b. All child care programs are cancelled.
- F. Cancellation of Weekend Activities due to Inclement Weather
1. If weather conditions require that school closures or early dismissal on the Friday immediately preceding a scheduled weekend activity, all scheduled activities shall be curtailed until such time that all driveways, parking lots, service areas, and walkways are cleared and the snow emergency plan is lifted for Baltimore County. The following activities may be affected:
 - a. BCPS-Sponsored Activities
 - (1) The executive director OR [of] office head with oversight of the scheduled activity shall consult with Transportation to determine if weather conditions warrant cancellation of the approved activity.
 - (2) Transportation will make a recommendation to the Superintendent on whether a weekend activity shall be cancelled. The decision of the Superintendent is final.
 - b. Planned use of facilities by non-BCPS organizations are cancelled.
 - c. In the event that the snow emergency plan is lifted over the weekend, the Department of Recreation and Parks shall consult with the Department of Physical Facilities to determine whether its planned use of facilities may occur.
- G. Closing of school facilities in the evening due to inclement weather, when schools were not closed or dismissed early during the day.
1. Transportation will make a recommendation to the Superintendent on whether evening programs shall be cancelled.

V. Special Provisions for Elementary and Special Schools

- A. The following dismissal procedures shall apply when a single elementary or special school closed early:
1. The principal will make every attempt to contact the student's parent or emergency contact of each child and notify him/her of the early closure.
 2. The principal is responsible for ensuring that all students are released in accordance with the student's emergency information.

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 1300, *Use of SCHOOL Facilities*
Board of Education Policy 4009, *Emergency Closings – Employee Attendance*

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