



## FOXBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools



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Dear Foxborough Families,

It is that time of year again, when we are forced to pay closer attention to the weather forecast. One of the most difficult challenges I have as a Superintendent is deciding whether or not to cancel or delay school due to inclement weather. Like weather forecasting, the school-closing decision process is not a perfect science. However, I believe it is important for students and parents to understand how it works as each town/city has its own unique set of factors that are taken into consideration when determining delays and/or cancellations. I hope this FAQ document answers your questions.

### **Who makes the decision about whether or not to close school?**

As Superintendent, I am responsible for the final decision. I work with District staff to monitor state and local weather forecasts, and consult with officials from the Foxborough Department of Public Works (DPW) who provide updates to me on snow removal operations and neighborhood road conditions. It is important to understand that this decision hinges on the status of road conditions from the Foxborough DPW. Their first priority will be town roads, then school parking lots, sidewalks, and all other town facilities will follow. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the district may be dangerous.

### **What time do you make the call?**

My goal is to make the decision to open, close, or delay by 5:15 a.m. or earlier. While I know there is often an interest in having a decision the night before, a lot can change overnight. Whenever possible parents/guardians will be informed of delayed starts and/or cancellations the evening prior should the meteorological information we have at that time allow us to make these proactive decisions. We realize that this assists families in the planning of alternative means of transportation and/or childcare.

### **How is the decision made?**

There are multiple factors used in deciding whether or not to close school. Information on road conditions, snow accumulation predictions, building conditions such as electricity and heat, parking lot conditions, air temperature and wind chill, and estimated times from the DPW as to when roads, walkways, and parking lots will be cleared of snow and ice.

We prefer to not make our decision based on weather predictions, which are not always accurate. However, sometimes this is unavoidable. We do share information with other local districts and check whether they are opening or closing. However, these conditions can vary greatly depending on the town even if they are our next door neighbor.

### **What is a delayed opening?**

Rather than close school for a whole day due to short-term weather situations, there may be days when the beginning of school will be delayed one hour, ninety minutes, or two hours. **School will**

**simply start later by the length of the delay.** Bus pickup, therefore, will also occur later. For example, if your child is normally picked up at 7:40 am, during a two hour delayed opening he/she will be picked up at 9:40 am. Lunch will still be available and dismissal will be at the regularly scheduled times.

### **Will you dismiss early if a storm is unexpectedly heavy during the school day?**

Early dismissals are very unlikely as we risk sending students home to empty houses. Families should have a plan in place in the event it is necessary. Our system uses the same buses to transport all of the grades. This is why our school start and dismissal times are staggered. After one group is transported, the buses go and begin another loop. We are not able to call additional buses to release all of the students from all the schools at once. Therefore, conditions may warrant a staggered early dismissal for all of the schools. This will allow the buses with slow driving conditions to get a head start on their first route and hopefully arrive at the elementary schools close to the planned dismissal time.

### **What about bus transportation during storms?**

Waiting at home for a child to arrive when the bus is late can be difficult, especially during a storm. Road and traffic conditions will slow the travel. Please remember that your child is actually safest on the bus, due to its size, as it slowly moves through town in a storm. This slowdown can be compounded as the buses complete their loops from school to school. If a loop requires 10 extra minutes in order to deliver students safely, the buses arrive to begin the next loop 10 minutes late. If next loop takes 10 extra minutes, the bus is now 20 minutes late, etc.

### **What about sidewalks and getting to bus stops?**

The Foxborough DPW clears the major sidewalks as soon as they can. The town relies on property owners and citizens to clear their own walkways in most of the town. Families need to be aware that unfavorable sidewalk conditions can occur during and after a snowstorm. Even if sidewalks have been cleaned, citizens clearing their driveways and walkways can cause sidewalks to be blocked. Melting and re-freezing of snow can also create an icing situation. Families should always be aware of the conditions of their child's walk to school or the bus stop and act accordingly.

### **What are parents' responsibilities?**

The safety of your child is paramount. Importantly, if you do not feel as though it is safe for your child to attend school, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives if weather conditions worsen. Parents of young drivers are asked to reinforce winter weather driving skills: allowing extra travel time, reducing speed, and not worrying about being late. We encourage all parents/guardians to proactively make alternative arrangements for all pending inclement weather situations that may impact the school day.

### **How are days made-up?**

As per State regulations, students must attend school for a minimum of 180 days, and the school year must end by June 30. If school is closed due to weather, the day will be made-up at the end of the school year.

### **How do power outages affect the decision?**

Inclement weather can affect the timeline for utility companies to restore electricity. If all school buildings have electricity, the goal will be to open school.

## How is the public notified?

Announcements about school closings and delays are posted as outlined below. Please be advised that, depending upon the severity of the storm, school and district administration offices may also be closed in addition to cancelling classes for students.

- District website <http://www.foxborough.k12.ma.us/>
- Twitter: (@FoxboroughPS)
- School Messenger email
- School Messenger phone call (“robo-call”) if the timing is appropriate
- Local Television and Radio: WBZ-Ch. 4, WCVB-Ch. 5, WHDH-Ch. 7, FOX-Ch. 25,  
Foxborough Cable TV and RIBA.
  - *Each station also posts school closings on its website.*

I hope this FAQ helps everyone understand the process used to make the best possible decision for our students. As always, feel free to call my office at 508-543-1655 or e-mail me at [berdosa@foxborough.k12.ma.us](mailto:berdosa@foxborough.k12.ma.us) with further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



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