

MANSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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December 2018

Dear Families,

It is the time of year when, once again, we need to stay advised of weather forecasts and the potential impact on whether to cancel or delay school. Like weather forecasting, the school closing-decision process is not a perfect science. However, it is important for families to understand how it works. Please see the frequently asked questions below:

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

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Director of Facilities, Mansfield's Department of Public Works, the Highway Department, and Mansfield Police officials make the final decision by 5:45am or earlier. If made later, parents have little time to make arrangements for childcare, and some school district staff may have already left for work.

What information is gathered to aid in the decision?

There are multiple factors used in deciding whether or not to close school. (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 Department of Public Works as to when roads, walkways, and parking lots will be cleared of snow and ice)

How is the information acquired?

District staff monitors state and local weather forecasts. The Department of Public Works and Mansfield Police officials provide updates on neighborhood road conditions.

What are parents' responsibilities?

The safety of your child is paramount. On days when weather conditions are questionable, but school remains open, parents are free to exercise discretion and keep children home from school. Parents of young drivers are asked to reinforce winter weather driving skills: allowing extra travel time, reducing speed, and not worrying about being late.

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

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. Other factors also influence the decision, including whether a number of neighborhoods are without power.

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 8:35am, during a one hour delayed opening he/she will be picked up at 9:35am. Lunch will still be available and dismissal will be at the regularly scheduled times.

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 (www.mansfieldschools.com)
- ✓ School Messenger phone call (“robo-call”) and email
- ✓ Facebook (Mansfield Public Schools) and Twitter (@TmmMPS)
- ✓ Massachusetts Television: WBZ-Ch. 4, WCVB-Ch. 5, WHDH-Ch. 7
- ✓ Rhode Island television: WJAR TV 10, WPRI TV 12, ABC TV6

Sincerely,

Teresa Murphy
Superintendent

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