

PROCEDURE FOR EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

1. DEFINITIONS: Conditions sometimes require early dismissal, delay of opening, or suspension of school. Orderly procedures are needed during such emergencies.
 - A delayed opening is a delay in beginning the school day for a specific amount of time.
 - Early dismissal is the closing of school prior to the completion of a regular school day.
 - A suspension is having the schools closed and not in operation for the school day.
 - An emergency closing may be a delayed opening on a regular school day, early dismissal on a regular school day, or suspension of school and activities on a regular school day.

Emergency conditions include such conditions as extreme weather; power, gas, water or heating system failure; or other situations as determined by school authorities.

2. RESPONSIBILITY: The decision for delayed opening, early dismissal or school suspension will be based on the safety, welfare and health of students and employees. Responsibility for implementing emergency closing will rest with the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Chair of the Board or the Vice-Chair will be advised of delayed opening or suspension. The Superintendent may designate appropriate assistant(s) to carry out duties in the Emergency School Closing process.

In the event there is immediate and/or imminent danger to students and/or employees, the principal or his/her designee may implement an emergency school closing for that day. The principal or his/her designee shall make every reasonable effort to contact the Superintendent before implementing such a closing.

3. PROCEDURES

- A. The Superintendent or his/her representative will normally announce the decision to delay, dismiss or suspend school. Regular school schedules will be followed in the absence of a publicized decision.

The decision to delay, dismiss or suspend school will normally be communicated by the Superintendent or his/her representative to appropriate radio and television stations. During an emergency involving delayed opening or suspension, decisions should be communicated daily to the appropriate news media, if possible by 6:00 a.m. of the day involved. However, if weather conditions are extremely severe and there is no hope of opening school, school announcements are to be made the night before.

- B. If an emergency occurs while school is in session, every consideration will be given for regular schedule continuance. When early dismissal is authorized, the appropriate media should be notified, normally by the Superintendent or his/her designee, at least 30 minutes prior to dismissal (except when imminent danger exists). When early dismissal and/or delayed opening is involved because of imminent danger, the media should be notified as soon as the welfare and safety of employees and students have been assured. Superintendent designees will immediately notify the assistants, principals, and Transportation Director who will implement appropriate action.
- C. Emergency school closing decisions may need to be coordinated with adjoining school systems. When so needed, implementation will be initiated by the appropriate designee.
- D. After-school activities will be suspended on the days when school is dismissed early or suspended, except as authorized by the school principal, with approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- E. In the event a principal has to invoke early dismissal or delayed opening because of imminent danger, he/she shall notify the Superintendent, news media and Transportation Director immediately.
- F. When an emergency closing of school occurs for any reason, the Transportation Director will be notified at the earliest possible time.

4. CLOSINGS

- A. When emergency school closing occurs, personnel will make up time lost in a manner prescribed by the Board of Education.
- B. Compensatory time or overtime pay will not be authorized for services rendered when emergency school closing occurs, except for employees who are specifically assigned overtime duties.
- C. All school personnel should report at regular time unless instructed differently through news media or other appropriate persons.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES IN EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to clarify the rights and responsibilities of school employees on days when the schools are closed due to hazardous weather conditions, natural disaster, or other emergencies.

Days shall be included in the school calendar that can be used to make up any of the 180 days of the school term on which school is closed for the reasons stated above. Generally, those days for Pitt County Schools shall be subsequent teacher workdays, unless specified differently by the annual school calendar. Therefore the missed school day shall become the teacher workday.

A. Attendance Regulations

1. School Suspension: If schools are closed due to inclement weather or an emergency for a day that would generally be made up on a workday as determined by the annual school calendar, all employees, with the exception of hourly food service workers, bus drivers, and other hourly employees (except as required by the principals/supervisor) shall either (a) report to their regular work station making an effort to be there as early as possible, but at least within two hours of the normal starting time, or (b) take leave in lieu of working. The leave may take one of the following forms:
 - a. Annual leave
 - b. Make-up time (to be made up at a later date in a manner set forth below)
 - c. Emergency personal leave (certified personnel only - if already earned - without five-day restriction) or
 - d. Leave without pay

Employees taking leave should submit appropriate forms immediately upon returning to work.

Time Sheets must reflect the option chosen. If time will be made up, it should show negative time (for example: "-6 hours" on February 11). The time sheet should show comp time during this pay period. Make-up time plus regular work time must not exceed 40 hours in a work week. (Note: No time-and-a-half will be paid for make-up time.)

2. The following employees are asked to make every effort to report to work during those days when schools are closed, still retaining the option to request leave as stated above:
 - a. Superintendent
 - b. Superintendent's immediate staff
 - c. Principals
 - d. Lead custodian or housekeeper
 - e. Director of Transportation
 - f. Transportation employees
 - g. Director of Maintenance/Operations
 - h. Maintenance/operations employees
 - i. Cafeteria managers (or make arrangements to have kitchens inspected)

B. Delayed Opening

In the event of a delayed opening, all employees are to report to their work stations the specified amount of time later than their normal reporting time. (For example: if schools are delayed two hours, employees should report to work two hours later than they normally would.) This delay will not have to be made up.

Child nutrition managers are requested to establish a beginning time for child nutrition employees in order to have lunch prepared at regularly scheduled times. It will be the manager's responsibility to notify appropriate child nutrition employees of their designated time of arrival.

Time sheets must reflect the exact hours worked, with a notation in the remarks column stating "delayed opening."

C. Early Dismissal

In the event of an early dismissal, all school employees, with the exception of those listed in Section b above, shall be dismissed as soon as it is determined that all students are safely enroute home. Employees of the central office and the maintenance, transportation and operations departments shall be dismissed at the discretion of the Superintendent. Time missed will not have to be made up.

Time sheets must reflect the exact hours worked, with a notation in the remarks column stating "early dismissal."

- D. If there is inclement weather or other emergency on a mandated or optional teacher workday, employees may exercise the options listed in Section A. Before reporting to work on such days, employees should contact the school/office to see if the building is open.

On such days, there will be no TV or radio announcements.

- E. In case of delayed openings, early dismissals or suspensions, the principal or his/her designee should always be at the school except in the case of extreme emergencies. At those times the principal should notify the Superintendent.

6. MAKE-UP PROVISIONS

- A. The first five days which are missed by students because of inclement weather or other emergency shall be made up as prescribed by the annual school calendar.
- B. Employees who exercise the make-up option when they have elected not to report to work on either a student day suspended for inclement weather or a teacher workday affected by inclement weather, may make up their normal workday (7-1/2 or 8-hour) with the agreement of the principal/supervisor. The time may be made up by working before and/or after normal working hours on a regular workday; provided that an employee must work a minimum of two hours make-up time on any given day.
- C. All make-up work must generally be completed by the end of the pay period for employees. Exceptions will be made only if the missed day falls near the end of the prescribed time.

- D. An equivalent of a day's pay shall be deducted from an employee's pay for any day not made up by the end of the prescribed time.
- E. PLEASE NOTE: Each principal and department head is responsible for an accurate recording and accounting of attendance and make-up days.

7. NOTIFICATION OF OPTIONS

- A. These regulations shall be made available to each employee prior to the beginning of the winter inclement weather season.
- B. Using this information and TV and radio announcements, employees shall determine their own course of action.
- C. Public service announcements shall always apply to students; no reference will be made to teachers or other employees for the following reasons:
 - 1. References to employees are not always made properly by the media.
 - 2. Such references confuse the message for students and parents.
 - 3. It projects a bad image when other workers are driving to work under difficult conditions and hear that educators are staying home.

NOTE: The welfare and safety of every Pitt County Schools' employee is of the utmost concern of the staff. They, with the students, make up the Pitt County school family. The Superintendent and his/her staff will decide the student schedule; it is up to each employee to make his or her own responsible decision when inclement weather or other emergencies arise. The worst consequence of choosing not to report to work would be the loss of a day's pay: this is a small price to pay for safety and continued healthy service. Principals and supervisors are asked to work with their employees within the framework of these guidelines to promote the safety and continued welfare of our family.