

FAQ WINTER WEATHER PROCEDURES

The following information concerning the management of severe winter weather conditions is provided as a practical resource to parents and other members of the community.

Where does the information come from that is used to make decisions about severe weather conditions and school closing?

If ice or significant snow is expected during the night, a careful monitoring of forecasts begins. At approximately 4:00 a.m., the superintendent collects information on road conditions from the DPW and confers with the Police Department, Fire Department, and the bus company, as necessary. Also, superintendents from surrounding towns are contacted to evaluate options.

What factors are considered in making a decision to delay opening or to close school?

Safety is the primary concern in making a decision and a number of factors are considered including:

- Information on road conditions from the police and DPW staff that are plowing, sanding and shoveling.
- The amount of snow on the ground or ice on the roads.
- Weather predictions for accumulation of snow and other severe conditions.
- Availability of buses (bus yard cleared, vehicles will start).
- Conditions of school grounds (parking lots cleared).
- Building conditions (heat and lights).
- Power outages and downed power lines.
- Temperature and wind-chill.

If roads are snow covered or accumulation is expected to continue through the morning, a cancellation for the full day is likely. If snow ends early and crews need time to clear roads and lots, a two-hour delay in school opening is more likely.

Who makes the final decision?

The superintendent of schools is responsible for the final decision based on the above factors and after consultation with many individuals, the bus company and other town departments.

When is the decision made to cancel or delay school?

Every effort is made to make the decision by 5:30 A.M. so that radio and TV stations can be notified, the announcement can be placed on the website, and families can be notified via a SchoolMessenger phone call by 5:45 A.M. Information is also available on major television channels (4, 5, 7, 25) and radio (WBZ 1030 am) as well as the Hanover Schools website and district social media sources.

If conditions and the forecast support cancelling school the evening before, that decision will be made as early as practical to afford families time to make plans.

Will an early dismissal be implemented when weather becomes severe during the school day?

Generally, the answer is “no”. Elementary and middle schools will not dismiss early when severe weather begins during the day because of families where adult supervision would not be available prior to the regular dismissal time. An early dismissal could send children home to empty houses and, in some cases, students would not be able to get into their homes at all. Due to a limited number of school busses, and the number of teen drivers at Hanover High School, a decision to release early would be made only after consultation with other town departments on the safest course of action.

Parents always have the option of keeping children home or dismissing their child if severe weather is predicted for the afternoon.

If severe winter weather is predicted in advance to begin during the school day, we may call for an early dismissal before the school day begins or the evening prior in order to give families time to prepare. Families are advised to have a back-up plan in the event that a parent or guardian would not be available to either pick-up or meet children who are returning home.

Will before and after school care be operational during a cancellation or delay?

If school is cancelled – all district programs are closed. In the event of a delayed opening, before school care will be open one hour later than the normal schedule. In the event of a planned and pre-announced early dismissal due to predicted severe weather, the after school programs will remain open for one hour after the early school dismissal time. Students must be picked up within that hour by a parent/guardian or other authorized individual.