

<b>FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Reg. No. 400-02</b>
<b>Subject: CLOSING OF SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF WEATHER, MAINTENANCE, OR OTHER REASONS</b>	<b>Issued: 10/26/79</b>
<b>Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent</b>	<b>Amended: 2/9/23</b>

I. Policies 401.6, 401.7, 401.8

II. Definitions

- A. *Emergency personnel*: An employee status annually determined, assigned and notified by the Superintendent's cabinet. The lead custodian, assistant lead custodian and specified operations/maintenance personnel are considered emergency personnel. Additional staff may be designated as emergency personnel by a cabinet member.
- B. *Liberal leave*: Unscheduled annual or personal leave usually granted during a weather or other emergency event when an employee is unable to report to work.
- C. *Overtime*: Work performed by an employee in excess of 40 hours per week. Nonexempt workers are paid time and one-half the employee's regular hourly rate for time worked over 40 hours in a workweek. Overtime will be paid as authorized in accordance with Federal Fair Labor Standards guidelines and in conjunction with collective bargaining agreements.
- D. *Virtual instruction* - Virtual instruction is a combination of synchronous, independent, and asynchronous teaching and learning that requires access to the Internet, an electronic device, web conferencing tools, and a learning platform. Teachers and staff deliver instruction aligned with curricula and account for student attendance and engagement.

III. Procedures

A. Closing Schools for the Day for Inclement Weather

The chief operating officer in consultation with the Transportation Department shall be responsible for recommending to the Superintendent or designee that individual schools, or all schools, be closed for the day for reasons of inclement weather.

The chief operating officer shall base the recommendation on information from:

1. National and regional weather information services
2. State and/or local police
3. County and state roads departments
4. Driver reports
5. Physical inspection of roads by Transportation Department supervisors
6. School districts in adjacent counties

B. Asynchronous Virtual Instruction Day for Inclement Weather

As an alternative to schools being closed for inclement weather, the Superintendent may determine that a day of asynchronous virtual instruction is more appropriate. The Superintendent may authorize asynchronous virtual instruction days per authorization from the Maryland State

Department of Education (MSDE). Details of the FCPS plan can be found here:  
[Virtual Day Instruction Plan](#)

C. Delayed School Openings

If weather conditions require that school be delayed, the Public Affairs Department will notify the media according to the procedures outlined in Section III.L. Inclement weather delays will affect programs as follows:

School opening delayed two (2) hours:

- A.M. classes for pre-kindergarten begin two (2) hours later than usual and dismiss one (1) hour later than usual, providing an estimated 1.5 hour session.
- P.M. classes for pre-kindergarten begin one (1) hour later than usual and dismiss at the regular time, providing an estimated 1.5 hour session.
- P.M. classes at the Career and Technology Center begin 40 minutes later than usual and dismiss at the regular time.

NOTE: For purposes of administering this regulation, times indicated are approximate.

D. Early Dismissal for Inclement Weather

1. Early Dismissal: All Schools

- a. In the event the weather pattern causes unsafe road conditions throughout the county, the chief operating officer in consultation with the Transportation Department may recommend to the Superintendent of Schools or designee that all schools dismiss early. The Superintendent or designee will notify the deputy superintendent.
- b. The deputy superintendent will notify schools and executive director of Public Affairs.
- c. The chief operating officer will notify appropriate staff per the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) emergency response calling tree.
- d. The Public Affairs Department will notify FCPS staff, the news media and others as outlined in Section III.L.

2. Early Dismissal: Individual Schools

- a. The chief operating officer and Transportation Department, in consultation with the deputy superintendent and the building principal, makes the decision.
- b. The Transportation Department will notify the bus drivers who serve the school.
- c. The deputy superintendent will notify the executive director of Public Affairs.
- d. The chief operating officer will notify appropriate staff per the FCPS emergency response calling tree.

3. Special Schedule Accommodations - Early closings because of inclement weather will affect some programs, as follows:

- a. When schools close for emergency reasons one (1) hour earlier than usual:
    - A.M. classes for pre-kindergarten and Career and Technology Center proceed on their regular schedules.
    - P.M. classes for pre-kindergarten, Career and Technology Center and Heather Ridge programs are shortened by one (1) hour.
    - Elementary magnet programs follow the schedule for full-day programs.
    - Full-day pre-kindergarten classes follow the schedule for full-day programs.
    - Frederick County Virtual School and the Twilight program at Heather Ridge School are cancelled.
  
  - b. When schools close for emergency reasons two (2) hours earlier than usual:
    - A.M. pre-kindergarten students remain at school for dismissal with full-day students.
    - P.M. classes for pre-kindergarten and Career and Technology Center programs are cancelled. Career and Technology Center students remain at their home schools.
    - Frederick County Virtual School and the Twilight program at Heather Ridge School are cancelled.
  
  - c. When schools close for emergency reasons up to three and one-half (3 ½) hours earlier than usual:
    - A.M. pre-kindergarten students remain at school for dismissal with full-day students.
    - A.M. classes at the Career and Technology Center follow the regular schedule.
    - P.M. classes for pre-kindergarten and Career and Technology Center programs are cancelled.
    - Frederick County Virtual School and the Heather Ridge Twilight program are cancelled.
- E. Cancellation of After-School, Evening and Weekend Programs and Activities Because of Inclement Weather
1. Except as noted in Section F below, if schools are closed on a regularly scheduled school day, all after-school and evening activities shall be cancelled, including events scheduled by outside user groups.
  2. Except as noted in Section F below, on non-school days when the snow emergency plan is in effect in Frederick County, all after-school, evening and weekend programs and activities shall be cancelled, including events scheduled by outside user groups. (Refer to FCPS Regulation 100-01)
  3. The FCPS Athletics weather-related procedures chart is located at: [Athletics Weather-Related Procedures](#)
- F. Cancellation of Parks & Recreation Programs in Community Gyms and Daycare Programs
1. Frederick County and Frederick City Parks & Recreation programs operating in community gyms in FCPS schools and daycare programs operating in FCPS schools will independently make decisions regarding modifications to their program schedules and communicate accordingly with the media, the building principal and the families they serve.
  2. In cases of severe weather, FCPS may restrict all access to schools including Parks & Recreation programs and daycare programs.
  3. Frederick County Parks & Recreation programs operate at Centerville Elementary, Deer Crossing Elementary, Middletown Primary, Oakdale Elementary, Sugarloaf Elementary, Thurmont Middle, Tuscarora Elementary and Walkersville Elementary.

4. Frederick City Parks & Recreation programs operate at Lincoln Elementary, Whittier Elementary, Butterfly Ridge Elementary, and Governor Thomas Johnson Middle.
5. Before and after school daycare programs operate at many elementary schools.

G. School Closing for Maintenance and Other Reasons

1. In the event of failure of building systems (electrical, plumbing, etc.), the principal shall notify the supervisor of Security and Emergency Management, who will initiate the FCPS emergency response calling tree. The Maintenance Department will survey the situation and take the necessary corrective action. If the problem is serious and likely to affect the school operation, the principal shall be responsible for communicating the status to the instructional director and executive director of System Accountability and School Administration (SASA). The Superintendent will make the closing decision, if warranted.
2. The director of Maintenance and Operations will review the proposed closing, as appropriate, with the Transportation Department, the Maintenance Department, SASA, the Food & Nutrition Services Department and the Public Affairs Department. The director of Maintenance and Operations will then recommend appropriate action to the chief operating officer.
3. A virtual instruction day is an option when a school must be closed for maintenance and other reasons. If a virtual instruction day is selected, the procedures outlined in III.B. will be followed.
4. The Public Affairs Department will notify local radio and TV news media and utilize FCPS electronic and broadcast media to communicate the news.
5. The deputy superintendent and chief operating officer will notify staff, as appropriate, per the FCPS emergency response calling tree.

H. School Delay/Closing in the Event of Tornado Warning

1. If a tornado warning is in effect for Frederick County before 5:00 A.M., all schools will be delayed two (2) hours. If a warning is issued for one (1) designated area of the county, the school system may elect to delay opening of schools in that area only. If there are tornado warnings in more than one (1) area, the entire school system will be delayed.
2. Tornado warnings issued between 7:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. will be evaluated based on location and operational status of schools and transportation.
3. Communication of decisions outlined in 1 and 2 above will occur in accordance with Section L.4 of this regulation.

I. Emergency/Weather Related Status

FCPS employees should refer to the closing information located at: [www.fcps.org/weather](http://www.fcps.org/weather)

J. Overtime

Overtime will be paid as authorized in accordance with Federal Fair Labor Standards guidelines and in conjunction with collective bargaining agreements.

K. Liberal Leave

1. Personnel designated emergency personnel who are directed to report to work are not authorized to use liberal leave.
2. When the system is closed due to inclement weather and a liberal leave policy is announced, employees who normally report to work when schools are closed should be aware of the following guidelines:
  - a. Employees must inform their supervisor if they will be absent or late.
  - b. Employees may use either personal or annual leave. If annual and personal leave are exhausted, the employee may request to have leave charged against future earned leave (pay stub will show a negative balance).
  - c. Support employees may, with supervisor's approval, make up time in lieu of using leave, or use earned compensatory time.
  - d. FASSE, FCTA and FCASA negotiated agreements outline some aspects of employee leave procedures in more detail. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to reference current agreements.

L. Notification

1. Whenever possible, morning decisions to close or delay school will be made by 5:00 A.M. and communicated to media outlets by 5:30 A.M.
2. Whenever possible, early closing decisions will be made by 10:00 A.M. and communicated internally and to media outlets promptly thereafter.
3. With a 2-hour delay, re-evaluation may occur by 7:00 A.M. If the original decision is changed, it will be communicated to the news media and internally by 7:30 A.M.
4. In the event it becomes necessary to close schools or delay the start of schools, the deputy superintendent and chief operating officer will notify staff as appropriate per the FCPS emergency response calling tree.
5. Major local and regional radio and television stations will be notified by the Public Affairs Department.

M. Exceptions

The Superintendent reserves the right to make exceptions to this regulation as deemed appropriate.

Approved:

*Original signed by*

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Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson  
Superintendent