



January 27, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Winter weather emergencies, such as snow and ice, may cause disruptions in school operations, including school closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals. This letter provides information about the procedures used when such disruptions occur. Also, information is provided about the weather contingency plan that would provide for makeup instructional days if the school year is disrupted by emergencies and schools are closed three or more days.

### **School Closing**

When schools are closed systemwide, all instructional programs and extracurricular activities in schools are cancelled. Private child-care providers in school buildings may elect to stay open if schools are closed but administrative offices are open. In extreme conditions, administrative offices also may be closed. If this occurs, private child-care programs located in school buildings are closed as well.

### **Delayed Opening**

A delayed opening means that schools open 2 hours later than scheduled. All school buses operate on the same delayed schedule, and therefore, the pick-up times are 2 hours later than normal. When elementary schools open on a delayed schedule, the following programs are cancelled—morning sessions of Head Start, prekindergarten, and other specialized programs or field trips scheduled before 10:50 a.m. (e.g., the Thomas Edison High School of Technology morning session). Activities that begin after 10:50 a.m. will be held as scheduled. Afternoon sessions of prekindergarten begin at the regular time. Parents/guardians should continue to check radio, television, or web announcements in the event a decision to delay the opening of schools is reconsidered and a decision to close schools for the day is made (by 7:00 a.m.).

### **Early Dismissal**

An early dismissal means that schools will close 2.5 hours earlier than scheduled. All school buses operate on that same early schedule, and therefore, drop-off times are 2.5 hours earlier than normal. When elementary schools close early, afternoon prekindergarten and other early childhood programs are cancelled, as well as any special programs or field trips scheduled after 10:50 a.m. Morning prekindergarten and morning half-day Head Start students will be dismissed at 10:50 a.m.

### **Virtual Instruction**

In the case of inclement weather and other emergency events, MCPS will select one of the above statuses, and communicate our status to schools and the public. While traditional snow closures will continue to exist, there are cases where the school system may enact virtual learning days. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), has opened a pathway for local education agencies (LEAs) to repurpose certain days as virtual school days in the 2022-2023 school year. To ensure meaningful and equitable virtual instruction during these days, pursuant to the Superintendent's authority under Education Article §2-303, MCPS will follow the approved virtual learning plan on days where weather events are

2100 Wootton Parkway • Rockville, MD 20850 • Tel. (240) 740-1500 • Fax. (301) 279-8569

more predictable, and staff, students, and families are given notice in advance, so they can properly prepare. Virtual learning may be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous. Virtual learning days will be determined on a case by case basis. Should MCPS decide to make a scheduled day a virtual instruction day, everyone will be informed through normal communication channels.

## **Public Announcements**

Information about school operations is announced publicly as soon as possible on area radio and television stations, MCPS TV (Comcast Channel 34, Verizon Channel 36, and RCN Channel 89), on the Internet at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org), through the *myMCPS* mobile app, and on a recorded telephone message at 240-740-2837. Emergency announcements are available by signing up for *Alert MCPS* text and e-mail notifications and on the MCPS Outlook, Twitter, and Facebook accounts. If schools are closed or delayed, the announcement is made no later than 5:00 a.m. (or the night before if possible). If schools are closing early, the announcement is made by 11:00 a.m.

## **Emergency Weather Contingency Plan**

The current school year for students ends on Friday, June 16, 2023. However, an emergency weather contingency plan will add makeup instructional days if the school year is disrupted by weather emergencies and schools are closed three or more days. Dates identified as possible makeup instructional days include: October 24, November 7, 2022; January 27, March 31, April 3, April 4, April 21, June 20, June 21, June 22 and June 23, 2023.

## **Weather Conditions and Decisions**

The school system uses a variety of sources of information to determine whether to close schools, delay the opening of schools, or dismiss schools early. These sources include actual physical inspection of road and school conditions by transportation officials and other staff at areas throughout the county and an analysis of independent reports from the National Weather Service, Accu-Weather, and the news media. The most severe weather conditions within the county are used as the basis for decision making. Consistent procedures are maintained in order to respond quickly to emergency weather conditions and protect the safety and well-being of students.

All public schools within Montgomery County adhere to the same schedule relating to emergency weather conditions. The decision to change school operations is made by the superintendent of schools or his designee typically by 5:00 a.m. or the night before if possible, and affects all schools within the school system.

Sincerely,



Douglas E. Nelson  
Principal