



December 20, 2016

Dear DCPS Families,

As we approach the winter months, we have begun planning for inclement weather. Almost every year Washington experiences a few days of very cold, icy, or snowy weather that necessitates closing or delaying school. Hopefully we will have a mild winter, but if not, we want you to be prepared.

How do we decide to close school?

The decision to delay or close school is informed by a number of factors, including temperature and wind chill, levels of snow and ice, road conditions, the availability of public transit, and how these conditions are forecast to develop over the course of the day. The Mayor, with advice from weather and city government experts, ultimately decides whether schools are open, delayed, or closed. A decision is typically made between 4:00-5:00 a.m. the morning of the delay or closure.

How is the public notified of school closings?

The best source of information is the DCPS Twitter account (@dcpublicschools). Information will also be shared on the DCPS website (dcps.dc.gov), DCPS social media accounts, and local TV and radio stations.

What does a 2-hour delay mean?

A delay causes schools to open 2 hours later than the normal start time. Schools will still close at the regular time. A delay does not count as a “snow day” and does not need to be made up later in the year. Any before-school programs will be cancelled. Schools will decide individually how to alter their bell schedule for a delay and if they will serve breakfast. When the opening of school has been delayed due to weather, afterschool programs will usually operate as scheduled.

What if inclement weather develops during the school day?

Early dismissals are used only in extreme situations such as when travelling to and from school threatens student safety. The Chancellor will decide whether to cancel extended day programming, afterschool programming, or an athletic event. If we need to close early, DCPS will immediately inform schools and families, and all students will still be served lunch before dismissal.

When will school be made up?

D.C. State law requires DCPS to have a minimum of 180 school days. To meet this requirement, traditional calendar schools will need to make up some days at the end of the year.

- If we have **1 snow day**, there will be no changes to the calendar.
- If we have **2 snow days**, June 14 will become a full day, and June 15 will become a half-day with dismissal at 12:15 p.m.
- If we have **3 snow days**, June 14 and 15 will become full days, and June 16 will become a half-day with dismissal at 12:15 p.m.

Extended Year schools will not make up any snow days as they already exceed the 180-day requirement.

Sincerely,
Jane Spence
Interim Chief of Schools