

## SNOW DAY FAQ

### **Who decides to cancel or delay school?**

The superintendent makes this decision after consulting with a number of other people.

### **What is the process?**

Beginning about 4:00 a.m., the superintendent and transportation supervisor consult multiple weather forecasts. Members of our transportation department drive to various areas of the District to check conditions. Depending on the circumstances, we consult with highway departments and transportation supervisors from other districts.

The superintendents from neighboring districts then confer with each other and compare information. It is after gathering all of this input that a decision is made.

### **What factors do you consider?**

Our primary consideration is whether our busses can safely transport students to and from school. To that end, we consider:

- Timing of the storm
- Actual and forecasted temperatures
- The progress of the crews working to clear the roads

We may also be influenced by other factors, such as the time needed to clear the school roads and parking lots or the ability of staff members to get into school safely.

### **Why don't you just play it safe and close whenever there is a question?**

We try to minimize interruptions to the educational program because too many can have a negative impact on our students' learning. Safety always comes first, but snow is very common in our part of the country, so if we can safely transport students, we will bring them in.

Also, we have a limited number of "built in" snow days that we can use without needing to adjust the school year calendar. Once we use up our built in snow days, additional school closings must be made up by shortening our spring break.

### **Why are neighboring school districts closed while Chatham is open, or vice-versa?**

There are often factors that cause districts to make different decisions. For example, if one highway department has malfunctioning equipment, that district may not be able to open on time. If a district has a half-day scheduled, they will not have a delayed start. One-bell transportation also gives Chatham more flexibility, as it takes about an hour and fifteen minutes to complete our bussing cycle. Other districts may need 2 ½ to 3 hours to complete multiple runs of busses and that may affect whether or not they close.

**The roads are fine in my area. Why do we still have a delay?**

The conditions vary greatly from one area of our district to another, due to the district being spread over a large area that includes several towns and varying altitudes. Sometimes roads are fine in one place, but are extremely treacherous in other areas.

**Is it true you sometimes have school on a snowy day so that we will not lose state aid?**

No. Snow days do not affect state aid. Students must attend a minimum number of days each year. If we use too many snow days, we make up the time by shortening our spring break.

**What factors are considered in deciding whether to dismiss school early in bad weather?**

We always work to try and identify the safest opportunity to transport students. In the event of inclement weather that begins while school is in session, we closely monitor forecasts and radar to determine if conditions will worsen or improve by the time our schools regularly dismiss. We try to avoid dismissing early because it can be a significant inconvenience for parents; however, when conditions are forecast to get worse, we may need to close in order to ensure that we can get students home safely. However, if forecasts and radar indicate that it will be safer to transport students around the time of regular dismissal we will dismiss at the regular time.

**The roads were in no shape for my teen to drive to school. Why was school not closed?**

Busses are much safer on the roads than cars. If you are concerned about your teen driver, please have him or her ride the bus.

**What do I do if school is open, but I feel conditions are unsafe?**

As a parent, you make the ultimate decision for your child. If you feel weather conditions make it too risky, keep your child at home.

**What is the quickest and most efficient way to find out about closings and delays?**

The Emergency Information Line is the FIRST place emergency closings or delays are recorded.  
Emergency Information Line: 518-392-2400 option 2

Emergency closing announcements are also made on:

Our Website [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com) (under the "Announcements" section)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ChathamCSD](https://www.facebook.com/ChathamCSD)

Twitter: Follow Mrs. Nuciforo on Twitter @Supt\_Nuciforo

Television: WNYT-13; WRGB-6; WTEN-10; WXXA-TV 23; Time Warner Cable News

Radio: AM- WGY 810; WHUC- 1230; FM- WFLY 92.3; WRVE-99.5; WYJB- 95.5; 93.5 FM

While we rely on technology to notify you as quickly as possible, that technology may be unreliable in extreme weather, particularly in a rural area such as ours. If the Internet is down, you may need to consult other sources.

**Why do you use the autodialing system to tell us about some closings, but not about others?**

Many parents have indicated that they do not wish to receive a call for every closing or delay, so we only use the auto dialing system when we make a change from a delay to a closing, when the closing is for an unusual reason (such as a power failure or water main break), or when students are at school and conditions force us to close our schools early.

**You started with a decision to delay, and then made a later decision to close. Why was the decision to close made so late?**

The decision to delay is made when there is reason to believe that conditions will improve during that time. In order to meet our bussing schedule, we must make a decision by around 5:15 am and we make the best decision we can with the information we have at that time. Sometimes, conditions do not improve as much as anticipated. If it is still unsafe for buses to travel by the time they must leave to pick up students on the delay schedule (about 8:00 or 8:15 a.m.) the decision to close is made.