



Administrative Procedure

Category:	Procedure:	
School District Organization	School Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather	
Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:	Revised Date:
AP-A-141	December 2008	October 2024

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GENERAL

It is occasionally necessary to temporarily close schools throughout the district due to inclement weather, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances. The Superintendent of Schools is the only person who may make the decision to close school for any reason.

Generally, the Superintendent will confer with the KCS Senior Leadership Team and other appropriate district staff and local governmental entities to gather information and make a decision concerning the status of schools. The intent to cancel or delay schools will be made as early as possible in an effort to provide families with time to make appropriate arrangements. In the event the decision to close or delay schools must be made in the early morning hours, that decision will be made prior to 5 a.m. if at all possible.

CENTRAL OFFICE HOURS AND STAFF EXPECTATIONS

School Closures. As a general rule, when all schools in the district are closed, all 255-day and 260-day employees (including principals) should report to work. If schools are closed and Central Office is open, Central Office will operate from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Staff members are expected to communicate with their immediate supervisors to take the appropriate leave in the event they are unable to report to the office. If schools are closed and Central Office is closed, staff will be notified as early as possible and should not report to the office.

School Delays. When schools are delayed, Central Office will operate normal business hours and all 255-day and 260-day employees should report at their usual time. Teachers and classified school-based staff should add the delay to the start of their usual contract time.

Exceptions. Staff safety is of the utmost importance, and the district reserves the right to make adjustments to these expectations as necessary.

TRAFFICABILITY ASSESSMENT

Bus contractors and Knox County Schools security officers tasked to assess road conditions will serve as the primary sources of information regarding the trafficability of bus routes. Other sources may also be used at the discretion of the Superintendent.

The Director of Transportation will identify specific bus contractors to make route assessments. Their activities will be coordinated by the Director of Transportation, who will alert the specified contractors when their services are required for route assessment.

When available, the Chief of Security may authorize the use of security assets to provide route assessment information. After hours, the Security Operations Center will coordinate the deployment of mobile security

1 patrols with the Transportation Safety Officer and the Director of Transportation, who will begin after-hours
 2 route assessment no later than 4 a.m.

4 **DECISION TO CANCEL OR DELAY THE START OF SCHOOL**

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 6 The Superintendent will convene appropriate staff members to review weather and road conditions no later
 7 than 4:45 a.m.

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 9 Staff members participating in any weather conference will include but not be limited to:

- 10 • Assistant Superintendent of Academics
- 11 • Assistant Superintendent of Business and Talent
- 12 • Assistant Superintendent of Operations
- 13 • Assistant Superintendent of Strategy
- 14 • Assistant Superintendent of Student Success
- 15 • Chief of Staff
- 16 • Executive Director of Public Affairs
- 17 • Chief of Security
- 18 • Director of Maintenance and Operations (for weather-related decisions)
- 19 • Director of Transportation (for weather-related decisions)
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22 The Superintendent may make a decision during the initial closure conference or may choose to defer the
 23 decision to cancel or delay the start of school until additional information is available.

25 **DECISION TO RELEASE SCHOOL EARLY**

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 27 The decision to release school early due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances shall
 28 follow the same process as the decision to cancel or delay the start of school. When school is release early,
 29 Central Office and all school offices will remain open and operational until it is reasonably confirmed that
 30 all students have safety reached their homes or have been picked up by their parent or guardian.

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 32 Principals will ensure that school phones and 800 MHz radios remain manned during this time. No school
 33 will cease operation or close until the principal reports to the Superintendent and receives permission to do
 34 so.

36 **DECISION TO MOVE TO REMOTE INSTRUCTION**

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 38 Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, the district may choose to use up to two days of virtual instruction in the
 39 event of inclement weather or illness. The decision to move schools to virtual learning shall follow the same
 40 decision-making and notification process as the decision to cancel school. In general, remote instruction
 41 days will only be leveraged in the event the district has already used the eight days built into the academic
 42 calendar for inclement weather, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances necessitating school closure.

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 44 **Reporting to Work.** In the event the decision is made to move to remote instruction, it is the responsibility
 45 of the principal to ensure all school staff are aware of their remote learning day work assignments.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Once a decision has been made to cancel school, delay the start of school, release students early, or move schools to remote instruction, the Executive Director of Public Affairs will immediately begin dissemination of that decision.

The Executive Director of Public Affairs will:

1. Develop a 20-25 second message for distribution using the district's mass notification (alert) system.
 - a. If the decision is made at 6 a.m. or later, notifications will be immediately delivered to all parent/guardian and employee primary contacts.
 - b. If the decision is made prior to 6 a.m., notifications will be scheduled for delivery beginning at 6 a.m.
 - c. If the decision is made the day prior, notifications may be made up until 8 p.m., and will cease following 8 p.m. to prevent disturbing families in the late evening.
2. Develop appropriate messaging for all social media platforms officially used by Knox County Schools.
3. Place a cancelation alert on the school system website and the websites of all schools in the system that use the KCS content management system.
4. Contact the primary news media for the region.

SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETIC EVENTS

All school-related activities and community use of school facilities will generally be canceled on any remote instruction day or on any day school is canceled. Principals, coaches and other school personnel shall not schedule impromptu practices, rehearsals, or other activities at times when school is canceled.

If schools are closed due to weather conditions on the last school day before a weekend or break, weekend activities may still be conducted if weather conditions permit. The Superintendent may also allow vital events to occur even if schools have been closed, provided the events can be conducted safely.

Use of district facilities for primary and general elections or for the emergency shelters, as designated by county or state authorities, are exempt from the policies set forth in this procedure.