



HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL CLOSING PROTOCOLS 2018-2019

PRESS RELEASE

Decision-making Process

The decision as to whether or not the schools will be closed or delayed is made by the Superintendent of Schools after consideration of available local weather reports and consultation with the Department of Public Works, other area school superintendents, and appropriate town officials. The decision is based on the practical considerations of the safe transportation of students and the accessibility of the schools to staff and students. Under normal circumstances, the decision is made before 5:30a.m. and is based on the assessment of road conditions, communications with DPW, and predictions of general weather conditions at the time the children are scheduled to be transported. Anyone living in the Boston area knows that those predictions are often unreliable. Therefore, parents are encouraged to use their own judgment in deciding whether to send their child to school based on the actual conditions in their area of town at the time their children would be leaving for school.

Radio and TV Stations Contacted

Cancellations or delays will be broadcast on TV stations WBZ, WCVB, WHDH, Fox, NBC and NECN and posted on their websites. Several stations offer phone, text and email notification and weather apps for parents who enroll. Harbor Media will also post it to their website at <https://harbormedia.org> and on social media. Closing and delay announcements will be posted on the school department's website www.hinghamschools.com and via an X2 message as soon as that is physically possible.

On occasion (and because of volume), it may be difficult to reach certain stations by phone. Parents and students should, therefore, check with more than one station to determine if school is cancelled or delayed. Individuals are asked not to call the schools. The number of lines is limited and staff may not be able to answer before school hours.

Do Not Call Police or Fire Departments

Parents and students are urged not to call 911, the Police Station or the Fire Department for information about the operation of the schools. These agencies are not the proper sources of information, and numerous phone calls may impede communications over phone lines which are designed for emergencies.

Considerations

Important: Please note that a decision not to cancel school should not be considered evidence that all routes to school are guaranteed to be hazard free. Snow banks, uncleared sidewalks, unusual icing patterns and other hazards caused by a storm may create specific problems in certain sections of town. In these cases, the age of the child and the nature of the hazard should be considered by parents before they decide whether or not to send their children to school. The Superintendent of Schools can only assess whether children can be transported safely based on predictions of conditions at the times children are transported, not whether all routes are hazard free. The ultimate decision on whether to send a child to school is the parent's. Parents of high school students who drive are encouraged to consider the child's experience factor when making the decision to allow student driving in bad weather. School bus, walking, or parent transportation may be a safer alternative.

School Delay Option

Parents should be aware that the Hingham Public Schools may use the option of delaying the opening of school by one or two hours to when weather conditions are predicted to improve. For instance, if it is predicted that weather conditions will improve by mid-morning, we may call for a delayed opening. If the DPW indicates that it needs additional time to clear school parking lots or town streets, we may also delay school. If there is a one-hour delay, it simply means that children will be picked up by the buses one hour later than typically scheduled; and walkers and children driven by parents should arrive at school one hour later than the typical arrival time. AM pre-school will be cancelled on days there are delayed openings. Parents should, therefore, make advance contingency plans for child care that can be implemented in the event of the need for a cancellation or delayed opening. School dismissal times will remain the same unless otherwise indicated.

Integrated Pre-School, Full Day and Half Day Kindergarten

In the event of a delayed opening, there will be no a.m. Integrated Pre-School; p.m. Integrated Pre-School will meet. In the event of a delayed opening, Integrated (Full Day) Pre-School will operate on the delayed schedule along with other full day students at grades K-5. Kindergarten students will attend school according to the same provisions as for Grades 1-5 students.

Kids In Action

Please be aware that in the event of a Hingham Public School cancellation, Kids In Action will also be cancelled.

On days that there is a delayed opening in the Hingham Public Schools, the KIA Before-School Program (grades K-5) will operate on the same delay schedule, with the times reflecting the amount of the scheduled delay. One hour delay – KIA will open at 8:00 a.m. Two hour delay – KIA will open at 9:00 a.m.

In the event there is a delayed opening, KIA pre-kindergarten classes at East School will be cancelled.

In the unlikely event of an elementary school early dismissal due to winter storms, KIA After School Programs will close at 3:00 p.m.

Sidewalk Plowing

Hingham has a limited number of sidewalk plows and they cannot be in multiple locations at the same time. They also move more slowly than other vehicular traffic. Therefore, it is unlikely that sidewalks can be cleared as quickly as roadways. Especially in the case of a major storm, schools typically will resume sessions before all sidewalk plowing can be completed.

Parents can help by organizing neighborhood car pools, walking with children to school, clearing snow banks at bus stops and driveway entrances to enhance visibility, etc.

As well, school bus drivers have been instructed to pick up “walkers” along established bus routes, if students are waiting in a visible location along those routes.