



West Orange Public Schools
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Interim Superintendent of Schools

C. Lauren Schoen, Ed. D.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

2022-2023

Dear Parent/Guardian:

In the case of inclement weather, dangerous road conditions or other issues that could cause a delayed opening, an early dismissal or a school closing, there are multiple means by which you may receive notice.

- **School Messenger**: We encourage all families to sign up in order to receive direct notifications including emergency closing notices. Instructions can be found on the district website under “For Parents”.
 - You will be able to choose voice mail, email, and/or text message on your cell phone and voicemail on your home phone. Selecting “all” ensures receipt of every message.
- Notice is also posted on:
 - The district website woboe.org
 - The district’s social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
 - West Orange Public Television Channel 36, Verizon 45
 - The following television stations and partner radio stations:
 - CBS
 - NBC
 - FOX
 - ABC
 - News 12 NJ

The decision to close schools, delay the start time or dismiss early is based on weather conditions, road conditions, and the ability to transport nearly 5000 students safely via school bus. Understandably, we cannot make a decision based on any particular street or location in town but rather what is best for most. Please keep in mind that on inclement weather days, regardless if it is a regular opening or a delayed opening, it is a reasonable expectation that school buses will be delayed both to and from school.

The primary reason for a 90-minute delayed opening is to provide the township public works and the school district Buildings and Grounds staff with additional time to clear the roads, parking lots and walkways. It also provides our staff more time to safely drive to work in order to receive students. For students who ride a school bus, please add 90 minutes to your pick up time. Calculating the time in advance allows for proper planning (i.e.: 7:22am bus pick up time = 8:52am delayed bus pick up time).

Early dismissal is the least of all options as I recognize the challenge it creates for parents and guardians to safely collect their student(s) from school or from the bus stop. This option is reserved as a last resort when the forecast indicates the roads will be hazardous at the regular dismissal time. Every effort is made to send the notification well in advance. The notification of an early dismissal could include cancellation or postponement of any after school events.

Like many of you, I monitor the weather regularly, as does the administration. I remain in communication with other Essex County superintendents regarding the impact of the weather despite the fact that each school district has their own unique circumstances. West Orange is very different from other school districts in Essex County as few townships have as many steep hills.

The township public works department and our own Buildings and Grounds personnel report the status of the road conditions, school parking lots, and walkways. We confer and collectively determine our plan in a timely manner. The safety of students, staff and parents/guardians remains the focus of my final decision.

New Jersey school law requires public schools to operate for 180 days from September through June. West Orange has built in three (3) additional days to the district calendar for inclement weather closings to effectively allow our schools to close for up to three days without negatively affecting the school calendar. This year, should it be necessary to close schools beyond our allotment, school days will be made up in the following order: April 14, 13, and 12 in order that our school district remains compliant and meets the 180-day NJDOE mandate.

Below please find the schedule for delayed openings or early dismissals:

- **Delayed Opening:** [90 minutes]
 - Elementary School 10:15-3:23 (45 minute lunch)
 - Middle School 9:40-2:53 (25 minute lunch)
 - High School 9:00-2:15 (54 minute lunch)
 - Pre School 10:15-3:23 (45 minute lunch)

- **Early Dismissal:**
 - Elementary School 8:45-1:15 (20 minute lunch)
 - Middle School 8:10-12:30 (cafeteria closed)
 - High School 7:30-12:00 (cafeteria closed)
 - Pre School 8:45-1:15 (20 minute lunch)

- **School Closed:** When it becomes apparent that roads will not be safe or safely cleared, schools are closed in the interest of safety. The notice to close schools is delivered as soon as possible. Please make note that weather conditions may make the decision extremely difficult and the notice may be delivered as late as 5:30am the day of a closing.

I encourage everyone to review this information carefully and keep a copy handy so that you can remain aware and ready to pivot, which will in turn allow our process to effectively keep our students, their caregivers, and our staff **safe**.

Sincerely,



C. Lauren Schoen, Ed. D.
Interim Superintendent