

WATTSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL DELAYS AND CANCELATIONS

Who Decides?

The Superintendent is required by law to ensure that the schools are open on all scheduled days unless conditions are unsafe for students. Accordingly, the Superintendent must decide if conditions warrant a change in the normal schedule.

When Is the Decision Made?

- Every effort is made to make decisions regarding delays and cancelations by 5:30 AM.
- When extreme weather conditions are forecast, the decision is made the preceding evening if possible to give parents additional time to make necessary arrangements for their children.
- If the conditions are drivable at 5:30 AM when the bus drivers arrive to start bus preparations and there is not an impending forecast of snow corroborated with weather radar, transportation operations will begin.

Who Provides Relevant Information?

- National Weather Service
- District's Transportation Director
- Township and Borough Personnel
- Erie County Department of Public Safety

What Are the Primary Reasons for a Delay or Cancellation?

- Extreme cold temperatures that could be unsafe for students.
- Road conditions that are too dangerous for the school buses to travel.
- Travel delays are expected to be such that staff cannot reach the buildings in order to teach students or students will be out at bus stops for an excessive amount of time.

What Is the Critical Question Regarding the Safety of the Roads?

- The Important question is, "Can school buses traveling at safe speeds get students to school safely and reasonably on time?"
- The question is not, "Is it snowing or are some roads slippery?" The answer could be yes, but that does not necessarily mean that buses cannot travel safely.

Are There Guidelines for Extreme Cold and Wind Chill?

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), no specific rules exist for determining when wind chill becomes dangerous. As a general rule, the threshold for **potentially dangerous** wind chill conditions is approximately -20°F.

What Are Cold Weather Alerts?

The NWS issues [Cold Weather Alerts](#) when dangerously cold air temperatures or wind chill values are possible. From lowest to highest potential danger, the alert levels are [Advisory](#) → [Watch](#) → [Warning](#).

The threshold for a **Cold Weather Advisory** is temperatures as low as -20°F.

Will School Be Delayed or Canceled Because of Extreme Cold Weather?

Extreme Cold Watch – If the NWS has issued an Extreme Cold Watch and wind chill predictions are for temperatures of -20°F or colder at 6:30 AM, a delay may be called. *

Extreme Cold Warning – If the NWS issues an Extreme Cold Warning, a delay will be called. School cancelation is possible.

Why Wattsburg Area School District Should Not Be Compared With Other School Districts.

WASD covers 144 sq. mi. and is composed of four unique climatological areas, with potential for weather differences among Greene, Greenfield, Venango, and Amity Townships. Therefore, if available information regarding conditions or forecast conditions indicate weather safety concerns in any of these areas, decisions will apply towards the entire district and all out-of-district programs serviced by the transportation department.

How Does the School District Communicate a Delay or Cancelation?

When the decision to delay or cancel school is made, the District utilizes a rapid phone notification system to inform families and employees directly via phone, text, and email. Local news media are also notified by a professional communications messaging service. Finally, delay and cancelation status will be displayed on the District website at www.wattsburg.org. Please obtain cancelation information from these sources.

What About Students Who Attend Non-Public Schools That Need Transportation?

In the case of a weather delay or cancelation, transportation for non-public school students will follow the Wattsburg Area School District schedule.

What Decision Should Parents Make?

Parents always have the responsibility for making decisions that are in the best interest of the health and safety of their own children. This includes decisions about sending a child to school when conditions are questionable.

The Superintendent will make a decision in the best interest of the District at large. Parents may decide to make a different decision for their own child based upon other factors such as age, health, attendance, academics, distance from the bus stop, road conditions unique to their area, bus stop waiting area, length of the bus ride, etc. In those situations, the School District will honor the decision of the parent who assesses the individual circumstance and acts accordingly.

While it is important to have students in school, on time, every scheduled day, the safety of each child is paramount. As the District makes every effort to preserve instructional time for its students, parents are urged to make the appropriate decision based on their own situation in order to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of their child.

What Is the Recommendation for Winter Dress?

Our school District is located in a Snow Belt area. Frequent heavy snow and cold temperatures are normal during the winter season. Students should always wear a coat, hat, gloves, and boots during winter weather.

* A wind chill of -20°F is the threshold at which point a delay will be considered. There may be warmer or cooler areas within the District. Available temperature reports may not reflect the conditions at your location.