



September 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Warm conditions will soon give way to rougher fall and winter weather. Please get ready by taking note of the following Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) inclement weather practices.

When snow, ice, or cold causes hazardous road and walking conditions, schools may open late, close early, or even close for the entire day. Decisions are made based on countywide conditions and weather forecasts. Conditions may not always be the same where you live, but we are focused on ensuring the safety of all students, staff, and residents across more than 350 square miles. Occasionally schools will open when local roads and sidewalks are unsafe for travel. If that happens, make the safe choice. You have the option of not sending your child(ren) to school. Students will receive an excused absence and will not be penalized academically, though they are expected to make up all assignments.

PWCS transportation teams determine travel safety by monitoring conditions and driving both major and remote roads across the county. They also consider input from police, Virginia Department of Transportation, and weather forecasts before recommending a decision. Safety is always the top priority, and we try to reach a decision as early as possible given changing conditions. We always strive to get the word out between 5 and 5:30 a.m., through many outlets:

- Email: Subscribe to E-News at <https://pwcsalerts.bbcportal.com>.
- Mobile: Check your MyPWCS app. Get it free on Apple or Android online app stores.
- Text Message: Register your smartphones through your E-News account at <https://pwcsalerts.bbcportal.com>.
- Online: Check [pwcs.edu](http://pwcs.edu) and or any school websites (if you have been monitoring the sites, refresh your browser with “Control F5” to get the latest web information).
- Social Media: Like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/PWCSNews](https://facebook.com/PWCSNews) or follow us on Twitter, [twitter.com/pwcsnews](https://twitter.com/pwcsnews).
- Local radio and TV stations make announcements and repeat delay and closing information regularly.
- Watch PWCS-TV on Comcast channel 18 and Verizon channel 36.
- Call the PWCS information line at 703.791.2776 and select option 3.

Occasionally, delayed openings are used to allow commuter traffic to clear or hazardous road conditions to improve before schools can open. If conditions worsen unexpectedly, a closing decision is still possible.

DR. STEVEN L. WALTS  
*Superintendent of Schools*

When bad weather hits or worsens after school starts, it may be necessary to close schools early. Expect announcements that “All Prince William County Public Schools will close one hour (or two hours) early today,” depending on conditions. Early closings usually mean all after-school student activities, athletic activities, and General Educational Development (GED) and Adult Education classes are cancelled too. But exceptions can be made, please monitor your email and check your school’s website for special information.

Here are some other important things to know:

- Do not bring students to school early during a delayed opening; staff may also be late.
- Only individuals specifically designated on the Student Emergency Card (along with parents/guardians and siblings) may pick up preschool and elementary students at the bus stop. Prepare for unexpected early closings by updating school files with the names of those authorized to meet your child when you cannot. Preschool and kindergarten students will be returned to the school if no designated individual meets them at the bus stop.
- Have a plan so children know what to do if they arrive home before anyone is there to meet them. Middle and high school students also need plans to ensure their safety.
- Please do not call your child’s school or PWCS offices during weather emergencies. The School Division telephone system is needed to attend to operational and emergency matters.
- PWCS staff work hard to make school grounds safe after severe weather. You can help by ensuring your neighborhood sidewalks, walking paths, and bus stops are cleared so students will have a safe place to walk and wait, and so buses will have a clear route to safely pick up and drop off children.
- Look for enclosed special instructions concerning SACC and Next Generation students.

Remember, the decision to change the school schedule is never made lightly.

If you have any questions concerning these procedures, please call the principal of the school your child attends prior to the inclement weather season.

Thank you for your cooperation and ongoing support.

Sincerely,



Steven L. Walts  
Superintendent of Schools

Attachment

**Special Instructions for School Age Child Care (SACC) and Next Generation Parents/Guardians**

- Parents will be asked to complete and return to their SACC site staff an “Inclement Weather Plan Form” which describes how their child(ren) will leave the school at dismissal when SACC and Next Generation programs do not open.
- If schools are closed for the day, SACC and Next Generation are closed as well.
- When Prince William County Public Schools opens two hours late, the SACC program will open two hours late; Next Generation will open on schedule.
- When schools close early, after-school SACC and Next Generation Programs do not open.
- When all after-school and evening activities are cancelled, SACC and Next Generation programs close at 5 p.m.
- If you have any questions, please call the SACC supervisor at 703.791.8844.

**Special Instructions for Preschool Parents/Guardians**

When a two-hour delayed opening of school is announced, this automatically alters the preschool schedules. Parents/guardians should review the following schedule:

**Two-Hour Delayed Opening**

- A.M. preschool and full-day preschool students should expect their bus to arrive at the bus stop two hours later than usual.
- A.M. preschool and full-day preschool walking students should arrive at school two hours later than the regular schedule.
- Only A.M. preschool students will be dismissed one hour later than the regular schedule. Full-time preschool students will be dismissed at the regular time.
- P.M. preschool student buses will arrive one hour later than usual and will be dismissed at the regular time.

**One-Hour Early Closing**

A.M. preschool and full-day preschool students will be dismissed one hour earlier than the regular schedule. There will be no P.M. preschool.

**Two-Hour Early Closing**

A.M. preschool and full-day preschool students will be dismissed two hours earlier than the regular schedule. There will be no P.M. preschool.