
Wilkes County Schools Winter Weather Procedures & Reminders

On mornings when school is being delayed or cancelled due to overnight wintry weather, School Messenger and the Wilkes County Schools website (www.wilkescountyschools.org) are the primary sources of communication to parents and staff. Whenever possible, the first School Messenger call will go out to bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria managers, principals, and assistant principals at 5:00 AM and will be posted to the website shortly thereafter. Media outlets will be contacted just after this message. The general call to everyone will be scheduled for 6:00 AM. For any student who boards a bus prior to 6:00 AM, parents should check the homepage of the website or one of the media stations listed below. The following media outlets will have information about early dismissals, closings, and delays:

- Television stations: WGHP, WBTV, WSOC, WFMY, WCNC, WXII
- Radio stations: WKBC, WIFM, WWWC, JOY FM

When school is on a two hour delay, your child's bus should arrive very close to two hours late. For example, if your child gets on the bus at 6:45 AM on regular schedule days, their bus should arrive around 8:45 AM on two hour delay days. This can be earlier, however, due to buses not traveling all roads because of limited bus routes. No bus drivers will begin their routes prior to 7:45 on days that we are on a two hour delay. This procedure will be followed except in rare unforeseen circumstances that are beyond our control, such as those on October 30, 2017.

When the general call goes out, parents and staff will be advised as to the status of the day:

- Delayed one hour for students (Staff will report at regular time)
- Delayed one hour for students and staff
- Delayed two hours for students (Staff will report at regular time)
- Delayed two hours for students and staff
- Open with limited bus routes – if this announcement is made, buses do not travel roads on the limited route list AM or PM
- Closed for students, optional workday for teachers
- Closed for everyone

Every effort will be made to make the call the day before. This is not always possible. No announcement means that school is operating on a regular basis.

In making the decision, WCS transportation department is out as early as 3:00 AM driving and checking the roads. There is constant communication with Emergency Services and Law

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Enforcement over the radios. Wilkes County is about 70 miles across. On several occasions the higher elevations have received significant snow and/or ice and the lower elevations were dry. This always causes people to question the decision. If we are not able to travel through any part of the county safely, then school will be affected for the entire county. Extreme cold temperatures in recent years have caused problems with the starting of buses, which has caused school to be delayed or even cancelled. Student safety and long term damages to these buses must be considered as well on days of extreme cold.

When schools are dismissed early due to weather, parents will be contacted using the emergency feature in School Messenger. This feature assures that all numbers are called until a person is reached. The radio and television stations listed above will also be contacted. Please keep in mind the following points about early dismissals:

- It takes just over 2 ½ hours to complete all bus routes once we dismiss.
- Lunches will not be served on days that schools are dismissed before 11:00 am.

Transportation Director, Eric Barker, will communicate conditions to the Superintendent and the decision will be made. Please remember that all decisions about school closings or delays are made at the district level. Concerns about decisions should be directed to Central Services, not individual schools.

Parents, please caution your teen drivers. It is not possible for us to check every road in Wilkes County. There may be icy roads at times due to changing road conditions. All drivers, especially our teen drivers, are advised to use caution on mornings that school is in session but the possibility for ice or black ice still exists due to changing conditions.

In preparation for the possibility of weather related calls, parents and employees should expect a test call with School Messenger this year. The test call will help us to make sure we are able to effectively contact everyone when needed. The first test call should go home on the evening of **Tuesday, November 7, around 6:00 pm. If you do not receive this call, please contact your school to make sure your information is correct in School Messenger.**

Limited Bus Routes are available at the School Bus Transportation webpage (www.wilkescountyschools.org) or you may request a copy at the front desk in your school.

While we hope for a winter with few interruptions to our school schedules and calendar, it does pay off for everyone to think ahead and be prepared in the event of inclement weather. The safety of our students and employees will always be the top priority of this school system.

