



INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION



Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Franklin

UNIQUE EMERGENCY PLANS FOR 2020-2021

For the 2020-2021 school year, Franklin Public Schools plans to implement remote learning instead of snow days during the winter of 2020-2021. Having opened school remotely positions us well to pivot to a remote learning day in the event of inclement weather. Instruction on these days will be structured. The Department of Elementary and Secondary education is allowing districts to do so this school year only, without having to make up the days at the end of the year.

In the event of inclement weather, educators and students/families should be planning for remote learning days to be held using the remote learning schedules previously communicated at the beginning of the school year. Schools will send additional information about daily schedules.

Should inclement weather bring widespread power outages, the district may need to close one, multiple, or all schools for the day, and the day will need to be made up at the end of the year. Asynchronous learning will be provided in the event that sporadic power outages are experienced for individual students to be able to be “virtually present” for the day.

The district will continue to use delayed starts to the school day if morning weather conditions make travel difficult but the forecast calls for improvement of conditions throughout the day.

WHO IS WATCHING THE WEATHER?

The Superintendent, school administrators, and public safety personnel carefully monitor the weather conditions during the snow season.



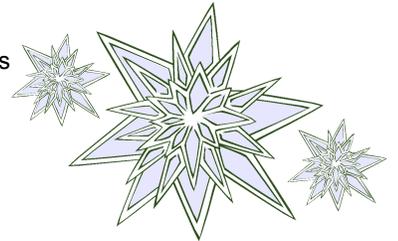
WHERE DO THEY GET THEIR INFORMATION?

School-district staff monitor state and local weather forecasts. The Town Department of Public Works (DPW) and Police Department officials test the road conditions and report that information to facilities staff. We are also using Precision Weather, a service tailored to give us real-time data on conditions in Franklin.

WHAT FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED WHEN MAKING THE DECISION TO CLOSE SCHOOL TO IN-PERSON LEARNING?

The safety of all district children is our primary concern in making our decision. In deciding whether children will be safe on campus during the school day, we look at the following factors:

- Information on road conditions from the town’s superintendent of roads and from the police
- Time snow starts to accumulate and the amount of snow expected
- Weather predictions as to what is expected later in the day
- Building conditions (e.g., whether we have power and heat; the extent to which power outages extend through town)
- Parking lot conditions
- Temperature and wind-chill
- The Department of Public Works prediction as to when roads, walkways and parking lots will be cleared



WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with DPW, the Highway Department, police, and the Director of Facilities will make the decision.



WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

The Superintendent must make the decision at the earliest possible time so that radio and TV stations can be notified. Many times the most important information is given at the 5:30 A.M. newscasts since conditions could have changed overnight. The Superintendent will start the notification process of parents and staff as soon as possible with a target time of 5:30 A.M.



HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

We use Regroup as our inclement weather notification system. Parents/guardians and school district staff will receive messages via phone call, text, and/or email about the status of school opening/closing during inclement weather situations. **Phone calls will be made beginning at 5:30 A.M. If you do not wish to receive a phone call early in the morning, please contact your child’s school to remove your number from our Regroup system.** Tune to the following stations for up-to-date information on school closings. Do not call the school unless it is an emergency. We will also send out notifications via social media and a posting on our website.

District-wide outages will be published on media channels. We are unable to publish school-level closures through the TV and Radio stations.

Television: Channels 25(Fox), 4 (WBZ), 5 (WCVB), 7(WHDH), NECN, and 10 (WJAR NBC)-R/

Radio Stations: WBZ (1030 AM), WMRC (1490 AM)

Regroup: Please keep your contact information current at your child's school

Social Media: Twitter: @FranklinPSNews Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FranklinSchoolDistrictMA>



WHAT IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY?

The safety of your child is first and foremost! The Franklin Public Schools cover a large amount of geography with terrain variations. Conditions can change suddenly. **On days when the weather is questionable, but the schools are open, please feel free to exercise your parental discretion to keep your child home. Teachers will be flexible in accepting late work under such conditions. Parents of young drivers, please reinforce inclement weather driving skills with your child:**

- Leave earlier
- Reduce speed
- Leave extra car lengths
- Do not worry about being late



Parents of drivers can choose to drive their child.

In years past, we have implemented emergency busing for walkers. Due to health and safety factors related to the pandemic, we can not commit to the implementation of emergency busing as we had done in the past. Please plan ahead to make alternative arrangements. Please reach out to your child's school if you need assistance.

WHAT ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE SIDEWALKS?

During and after any snowstorm, clearing the roads and parking lots are the town's first priority. Second, in priority is the clearing of the sidewalks. Ideally, both roads and sidewalks will be sufficiently clear of snow before we will open. However, please be aware that schools may be open before sidewalks are clear. There may, however, be some days when sidewalks will have snow cover that students will have to walk through on their way to school. Sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the DPW and due to a large number of sidewalks, it may take up to a week to clear them. Parents/guardians must exercise their discretion on how students will arrive/depart from school.



PLAN AHEAD

We ask all parents to make emergency alternative childcare arrangements should the day come when the children have no school, FPS moves to remote instruction for the day, or school is delayed.



MAKE-UP DAYS

As per school attendance regulations, students must attend school for a minimum of 170 days in 2020-2021, and the school year must end by June 30th. Remote learning days will count toward the 170; if school is closed due to power outages, these days will need to be made up, and the school year will be adjusted accordingly. A large number of days may result in adjustment of school vacation time.

POWER OUTAGES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Snowstorms, Nor'easters, and Hurricanes may negatively impact the ability of utility companies to restore power in a timely manner. If all schools have power and the roads are clear, we endeavor to open school. However, other factors also influence the decision. Debris (trees, downed lines, and safe routes to school) are impacted by road conditions. Also, a number of homes without power may influence the decision to open or close schools or to move instruction to be remote. As with all our decision making, school officials consult with Public Safety leaders to make the best decision within the framework of the information available.



Thank you for planning in advance.

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