

One of the most difficult challenges for the Superintendent of Schools is deciding whether or not to cancel or delay school due to inclement weather. Like weather forecasting, the school-closing decision process is not a perfect science. However, it is important for families to understand how the process works. This FAQ document was designed to answer such questions.

# SNOW DAY FAQ



## Who makes the decision about whether or not to close school?

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Director of Operations, Westwood's Department of Public Works, the Highway Department, and Westwood Police officials, make the final decision by 5:45am or earlier. If made later, parents have little time to make arrangements for childcare, and some school district staff may have already left for work.

## What information is gathered to aid in the decision?

There are multiple factors used in deciding whether or not to close school: information on road conditions, snow accumulation predictions, building conditions such as electricity and heat, parking lot conditions, air temperature and wind chill, and estimated times from the Department of Public Works as to when parking lots, roads, and walkways will be cleared of snow and ice.

## How is the information acquired?

District staff monitors state and local weather forecasts. The Department of Public Works and Westwood Police officials provide updates on neighborhood road conditions.

## What are parents' responsibilities?

The safety of your child is paramount. On days when weather conditions are questionable, but school remains open, parents are free to exercise discretion and keep children home from school. Parents of young drivers are asked to reinforce winter weather driving skills: allowing extra travel time, reducing speed, and not worrying about being late.

## How are days made-up?

As per State regulations, students must attend school for a minimum of 180 days and the school year must end by June 30. If school is closed due to weather, the day will be made-up at the end of the school year.

## How do power outages affect the decision?

Inclement weather can affect the timeline for utility companies to restore electricity. If all school buildings have electricity, the goal will be to open school. Other factors also influence the decision, including whether a number of neighborhoods are without power.

## What is a delayed opening?

Rather than close school for a whole day due to short-term weather situations, there may be days when the beginning of school will be delayed one hour, ninety minutes, or two hours. **School will simply start later by the length of the delay.** Bus pickup, therefore, will also occur later. For example, if your child is normally picked up at 8:35am, during a one hour delayed opening he/she will be picked up at 9:35am. Lunch will still be available and dismissal will be at the regularly scheduled times.

## How is the public notified?

District website ([www.westwood.k12.ma.us](http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us)), Twitter (@[@westwood\\_ps](https://twitter.com/westwood_ps)), and Facebook ([fb.com/westwoodschoools](https://www.facebook.com/westwoodschoools))

School Messenger email

School Messenger phone call ("robo-call"): If the timing is appropriate, a telephone call may be made to families.

Local Television: [WBZ-Ch. 4](#), [WCVB-Ch. 5](#), [WHDH-Ch. 7](#), [WFXT-Ch. 25](#), and [NECN/NBC10 Boston](#).

*Waiting for television broadcasts is often the least effective means of learning about school closings. It is recommended that you first rely on the resources above. Each station also posts school closings on its website.*