

# **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS AND DELAYS**

## **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. Consequently, the Superintendent must decide if conditions warrant a change in the normal schedule.

## **When is the Decision Made?**

The Process of gathering relevant information begins at approximately 3:30 a.m. Delays and cancellations are decided before 5:30 a.m. When extreme cold is forecast, the decision is often made the preceding evening in order for the announcement to be broadcast on the 11 p.m. news.

## **Who Provides Relevant Information?**

- The Director of Administrative Services, Mr. Jeffrey Kline
- The U.S. Weather Bureau
- The Hampton Township Police Department and the Department of Public Works
- The District's transportation contractors: Critchlow, Laidlaw, and Monark
- School personnel in surrounding school districts, when appropriate

## **What are the Primary Reasons for a Delay or Cancellation?**

- Road conditions that are too dangerous for the school buses to travel
- Extreme cold temperatures that could be injurious to students

## **What are the Guidelines Regarding Extreme Cold?**

Information is gathered from the National Weather Service and local weather services:

- If the wind chill is predicted to be -10 degrees or colder, postponing the opening of school for two hours will be likely
- If the wind chill is predicted to be -25 degrees or colder, the cancellation of school will be likely

## **What is the Critical Question Regarding the Safety of the Roads?**

The critical question is: Can school vans and buses traveling at safe speeds get students to school safely and reasonably "on time?" The question is not: Is it snowing or are the roads slippery? That answer could be yes but that does not always mean that buses cannot travel safely.

## **How Does the School District Communicate the Delay or Cancellation?**

Each time a decision to delay or cancel school is made, the following stations are notified: KDKA, WTAE & WPXI. The District website ([www.htsd.k12.pa.us](http://www.htsd.k12.pa.us)) will also display the status of the delay or cancellation. Please obtain information from these sources. Additionally, the District recently installed the Alert Now, rapid notification system, which will call a home or cellular telephone in order to notify families of a delay or cancellation. Please do not call the Schools or Administration.

## **Why We Should Not be Compared with Bordering Districts:**

Hampton is bordered by the Deer Lakes, Fox Chapel Area, Shaler Area, North Allegheny, and Pine-Richland School Districts. Each of these districts is a merger of two or more townships and/or municipalities. Hampton stands alone as a single township serviced by a single police department and Township road crew. Hampton Township is 16 square miles, while most of the surrounding districts are more sprawling and have more extended and complicated bus routes. Hampton also has a history of well-maintained roads thanks to the Township. Note: The Township does not maintain the following State or County roads: Middle Road, Duncan Avenue, Harts Run Road, and Route 8.

## **How Do School Delays Affect Half-Day Kindergarten Classes?**

When the start of school has been delayed for two hours, the morning classes are in session from 10:30 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. and afternoon classes meet from 1:15 p.m. to 3:10 p.m. However, in the event that a two-hour delay occurs on a Friday early dismissal day, then Morning Kindergarten will meet from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and Afternoon Kindergarten will meet from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## **What About Early Dismissal?**

In the event of a rare early dismissal, High School students are sent home first, followed by Middle School students, and finally Elementary students. This is designed to help parents/guardians in their planning so that an adult or older child will be in the home before the elementary child arrives home.

## **What About Students Who Attend Non-Public Schools Requiring Transportation?**

Transportation for non-public school students will always follow the Hampton Township School District schedule.

## **What Decision Should Parents Make?**

Parents always have the responsibility for making decisions 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. A parent 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 to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of their child.