

## PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND CANCELATIONS

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to set forth procedures for the emergency/weather related closing of schools and the Center for Education Services as well as the cancelation of scheduled activities at school facilities.

### II. Background

Hazardous weather conditions or other emergencies may present potential threats to students, staff members, and others who utilize school facilities. It is important to have a contingency plan in place to address such situations.

### III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Essential personnel: The Superintendent, in conjunction with key administrative staff, shall determine, assign, and notify those employees designated as essential personnel beyond what may be defined by any negotiated agreement.

Designated essential personnel may be required to report for work as directed by the Superintendent, or his/her designee, when schools and/or Center for Education Services are closed, following the emergency/weather related codes.

Additional staff may be designated as essential personnel by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

- B. Liberal leave: Unscheduled leave usually granted during a weather or other emergency event when an employee is unable to report to work.

Essential personnel are excluded from the use of liberal leave.

- C. Emergency/weather related codes: Color codes used to describe when an employee should report to work during weather/emergency related school and/or office closures.

- D. Work Week: For the payroll purposes relating to standard hours and determining overtime calculations, the work week is Monday to Sunday.

### IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

#### A. Notification

When schools and/or the Center for Education Services are to be closed or opened with a delay because of inclement weather or for other emergency reasons, an announcement will be made by 6:00 a.m. via the alert phone call and/or e-mail system, the system's web and social media pages, area radio, and local television stations. Additionally, a message will be recorded on the main phone line for Washington County Public Schools (WCPS).

If only selected schools are to be closed or openings delayed, the announcement will specify the schools affected.

Early dismissal of schools and/or the Center for Education Services will be announced on the system's web and social media pages, via an alert phone call and/or e-mail, and local television/radio stations.

**B. Emergency/Weather Related Status Codes**

The Superintendent or his/her designee will determine whether an emergency/weather-related code should be issued. The following status codes will be used in the event of an emergency/weather related closing:

	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
<b>Building Status</b>	Schools open late/early dismissal  Center for Education Services open	Schools closed to students  Center for Education Services open	Schools & Center for Education Services closed to students, all employees, and the public
<b>Who Reports</b>	Essential personnel report per specific direction from Center for Education Services  12-month employees report on time  10-month Educational Support Personnel ("ESP") adjust report time or maintain regular hours as directed by your supervisor  10-month and 11-month teachers adjust report time to reflect delay or early dismissal  A&S staff report on time	Essential personnel report per specific direction from Center for Education Services  12-month ESP report on time Liberal leave in effect  10-month ESP do not report  10-month and 11-month teachers do not report  10-month A&S do not report  11-month and 12-month A&S staff report on time. Liberal leave in effect.	Essential personnel do not report unless directed by the Superintendent or designee

**C. Liberal Leave**

Personnel designated as essential personnel are not authorized to use liberal leave.

When the system is status Code Yellow, Code Orange, or closed due to inclement weather, liberal leave is in effect, employees who normally report to work when schools are closed should be aware of the following guidelines:

1. Employees must inform their supervisor if they are requesting to work a modified schedule.
2. Employees utilizing liberal leave may use any available accrued leave. Please note: Employees' use of sick or personal leave on liberal leave days is permitted, but will count against any perfect attendance incentives offered under their negotiated agreement.

3. 12-month Educational Support Personnel (ESP) employees may take annual, personal, or sick leave, or make up time within the same week in lieu of using leave, with supervisor's approval. Use of unpaid leave is prohibited.
4. Special Considerations for 10- or 11-month ESP:
  - a. Employees may make up standard hours missed due to a full or early closing or delayed opening within the same work week in lieu of using leave, with their supervisor's approval.
  - b. Employees may choose to go unpaid for any standard hours not worked due to a full or early closing or delayed opening.
  - c. Employees may use any accrued leave available. Please note: Employee's use of sick or personal leave will count against any perfect attendance incentives offered under the *Negotiated Agreement*.

**D. Cancellation of Scheduled Activities**

1. If there is a delayed opening, there will be no A.M. or P.M. pre-kindergarten program and no breakfast program.
2. When schools are dismissed due to inclement weather, all athletic and school-sponsored activities must be canceled or postponed. Organizations providing after school care for elementary age students may continue to operate, but are encouraged to seek options for early closing.
3. When schools do not open due to inclement weather, scheduled activities and/or practices are canceled or postponed.


**E. Considerations**

A State of Emergency, as declared by the Governor of Maryland, does not automatically enact any of the status codes above. Code Red will only be used under extraordinary circumstances.

**F. Exceptions**

The Superintendent reserves the right to make exceptions to this administrative regulation as deemed appropriate.

Approved:

  
Boyd J. Michael III, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Date: November 6, 2019

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Washington County Public Schools