



NEW for 2009-10: *We have been notified that Whatcom County plans to implement emergency road restrictions — after prolonged cold weather and as the temperature rises — to prevent road surfacing damage. We have been informed that the county will not allow school buses on some roads, due to vehicle weight, during restrictions when thawing occurs. This means that the district may be forced to implement snow routes and possible other route changes during thawing when there is no snow or ice on the roads. If buses are not allowed on some roadways, parents/guardians will need to be prepared to make alternate arrangements or transport children to and from school during the county's restriction period.*

HOW CAN I GET WEATHER/EMERGENCY INFORMATION?

Depending on weather conditions, schools will close for the day, open two hours late with regular bus routes or snow bus routes, or open on time with snow bus routes. Changes to the school schedule are usually announced by 6 a.m. Weather emergencies can sometimes disrupt power and telephone service. The district will use a variety of methods to keep you informed, but please remember to keep a battery-equipped radio as your emergency communications back-up:

- ◆ Tune to local media:

KGMI Radio (790 AM)	KOMO-TV (Channel 4)
KAFE Radio (104.3 FM)	KING-TV (Channel 5)
KOMO Radio (1000 AM)	KIRO-TV (Channel 7)
KIRO Radio (710 AM)	
- ◆ Bookmark the Web site www.bsd501.org and sign up to receive notices by e-mail. To sign up to get regular news and emergency information, click on E-News Registration at www.bham.wednet.edu.
- ◆ Call 676-6400 for a recorded message in English. Please do not call Transportation because it is important to keep lines open for emergencies.
For Español, русский, tiếng từ and Punjabi translations: 647-6815.

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE?

We closely monitor the weather. Most often, decisions are made in the early morning rather than the night before so that the most current weather conditions and forecasts can factor into the decision. We recognize the impact on family schedules, and will communicate any decision as quickly as possible. In the early morning hours (typically beginning at 3 a.m.), staff drive main roads and side streets throughout school district boundaries to assess driving and walking conditions. Information is compiled and reported to the Superintendent, who will make the decision – based on the best available information at that time – to close, delay and/or run buses on snow routes. We understand these decisions disrupt family life and appreciate your patience during these severe weather situations. While we know that our students and families are best served when we are open, our top concern is the safety of our students and staff.

WILL SOME SCHOOLS CLOSE OR DELAY WHILE OTHERS REMAIN OPEN?

Generally, no. Our school district is made up of about 100 square miles. Road and walking conditions usually vary widely from one neighborhood to another. This makes for a difficult decision on whether to close or delay school and/or use snow bus routes in all or only parts of our community. The decision whether to close or delay applies to all schools so that it will be easily understood and equitable for all students, staff and families. In rare circumstances when an emergency such as a prolonged power outage affects only a specific area, schedule changes may be needed for that school or set of schools.

WHAT IF A STORM BEGINS WHEN CHILDREN ARE ALREADY AT SCHOOL?

We try, if at all possible, not to dismiss school early due to weather, except in rare extreme weather conditions. Young children cannot be dropped off at bus stops without an adult and releasing early is problematic when families are not expecting it. Families may choose to pick up their children early. We do our best to monitor and anticipate conditions. In severe weather, use local media, our Web site or phone line to stay informed throughout the school day. Please make sure that your child's school has your updated contact information.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SCHOOL OPENS TWO HOURS LATE?

Students catch the bus about two hours later at their regular bus stop or at their snow route stop (see reverse) if snow routes are in effect:

- ◆ 9:45 a.m. start for high schools and 10:50 a.m. for Options/GRADS
- ◆ 10:30 a.m. start for middle schools
- ◆ 11 a.m. start for elementary schools (includes full-day kindergarten and KIDS program)
- ◆ A.M. preschool and A.M. kindergarten classes at all sites are cancelled
- ◆ P.M. kindergarten begins at its regular time of 12:55. Afternoon preschool begins at 1:30 p.m.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN “SNOW ROUTES” ARE IN EFFECT?

A snow route is a modified bus route that generally runs on main roads rather than side streets or through neighborhoods where driving a school bus may not be possible during severe weather.

If snow routes are in effect, students must catch their bus at alternate stops. On these snow route days, students are returned after school to their snow route stops regardless of changes in the weather. Depending on where you live, a snow route may or may not be necessary. It is the responsibility of families to know if they live on a snow route and in which snow route group — please see reverse. Bus drivers may also remind students if they live in a snow route area.

IF SCHOOL IS CLOSED, WHEN WILL MISSED DAYS BE MADE UP?

State law requires that children attend school 180 days. Children must be present for a certain number of hours each day in order for it to count as a school day. When school is delayed, children are in attendance the hours needed to meet state requirements. When school is closed, missed days must be made up unless they are waived by the state. State law does not currently allow school districts to add minutes onto each school day to make up missed time. Our school district's 180-day calendar is part of the contract with our labor associations. The 2009-11 teachers' contract states that the first two missed school days will be made up at the end of the school year, which if needed, would be June 18 and 21, 2010. If additional make-up days are needed, the district and labor associations will work together on a solution.

We recognize the importance of having children in school on a regular schedule with quality, uninterrupted learning time. With safety as our primary concern, decisions that impact student learning are always weighed with careful consideration. Please be patient during weather situations as we share in the frustration regarding schedule changes.

IF SCHOOL IS CLOSED, ARE ACTIVITIES/EVENTS/MEETINGS CANCELLED?

Yes. All school and district athletics held on district property — including mandatory or voluntary practices/rehearsals, activities (field trips and school/district facility rentals), meetings/events previously planned for before, after school and evening — are cancelled. When school is open on snow routes or delayed, school and district administrators decide whether to cancel activities, meetings and events on a school-by-school basis. This information will be communicated to families.