

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winter Weather Schedule Information and Announcements

Haywood County, North Carolina – October 5, 2021

Haywood County Schools has closed an average of nine days during the last ten years because of inclement weather. Inclement weather often creates hazardous travel conditions. Hazardous travel conditions may require altering school schedules, altering bus routes or closing schools. Schools will be closed when weather causes hazardous widespread travel hazards or fifteen percent (15%) of the bus routes have to be altered or conditions prevent all buses from running their regular routes at an individual school.

When weather conditions cause a change in school schedules, local media are notified by 5:45 a.m. so the change may be announced as soon as reasonably possible. The school system will continue to use a rapid notification system for parents and staff. Parents are encouraged to contact their school to make sure contact information is current. Weather related announcements are posted on the school system website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Interested individuals may also call 456-2400 (extension 2177 for English, Extension 2178 for Spanish) to hear a recorded message. Our weather-related announcements include:

Two-Hour Delay – Buses will operate two hours later than their regular schedule for morning bus runs. Buses will not run on icy roads. In the afternoon, buses will operate their normal time and route schedule to the extent roads can be safely traveled. Parents are encouraged to meet school buses on the route where road conditions do not allow a bus to travel. On two-hour delays, school buildings will open on the normal operating schedule so working parents may take children to school. Students arriving early should report to their first class or the school's designated area. Faculty and staff should report to work on the normal schedule. Students who cannot travel safely to school will be eligible for an excused absence.

In rare instances, a Three-Hour Delay may be called. Delay schedules improve travel safety by allowing drivers to better see road conditions. Delay schedules can provide time for the Department of Transportation to work on road trouble spots. Delays are also used in some instances to determine if early morning winter storms develop as forecasted.

School Closed – Optional Workday – Schools will be closed for students. Faculty and staff may report to work or take accumulated annual leave day.

School Closed – Annual Leave Day – Schools will be closed for students. Ten-month employees will have an Annual Leave Day deducted from their leave allotment and should not report to work. Eleven- and twelve-month employees may report to work or use accumulated annual leave.

Closed (or No Day) – Schools will be closed for students and all staff. Staff may only work with the prior approval of the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent or Principal. This day may be used for several reasons: (1) when weather causes school to be closed on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and the make-up day is scheduled for Saturday (2) when annual leave days and workdays have been exhausted or are nearly exhausted (3) when travel conditions are extremely dangerous and there is a significant risk of injury if employees attempt to report to work.

Remote Learning Optional Workdays (RLOWs) were required by state law beginning with the 2020-21 school year. Five RLOWs are included in the school calendar at the beginning of the school year. Up to ten additional RLOWs may be used on inclement weather days. RLOWs include frontload learning activities and assignments. In-person and live virtual learning are not required on RLOWs. Teachers should be prepared to inform students and provide appropriate learning activities for RLOWs when school is closed because of inclement weather.

Families and employees should be cautious when considering activities during June 6-10 and April 11-15. These are dates that may be needed to make up missed instructional time should there be frequent winter weather or other disruptions to the school schedule.

“We try to focus on the travel conditions of our roads across the county rather than forecasts when making weather related schedule changes,” said Superintendent, Dr. Bill Nolte. “Since weather can change quickly in our mountains, we need to make some decisions in the early morning hours. This allows us to consider the most current weather and road conditions.”

“Predicting road conditions and making decisions about school schedules is not a perfect science,” said Transportation Director, Stephen Sharpe. “We monitor forecast data, collect information from neighboring counties, and use firsthand information from staff checking road conditions. When making decisions about school schedules, we focus on student and staff safety.”

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