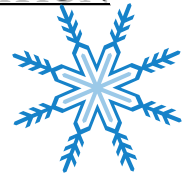




# INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION



**Maureen Sabolinski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools, Franklin**

## WHO IS WATCHING THE WEATHER?

The Superintendent, school administrators and public safety personnel, carefully monitor the weather conditions during the snow season. Our intention is to open schools, however the timing of snow is unpredictable and weather is changeable.



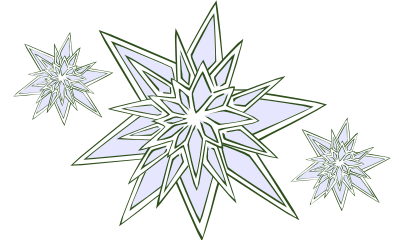
## WHERE DO THEY GET THEIR INFORMATION?

School-district staff monitor state and local weather forecasts. The Town Department of Public Works (DPW) and Police Department officials test the road conditions and report that information to facilities staff. We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous bus routes in the district. So, even if it looks clear on your street, dangerous conditions may exist in other parts of our town or on highways. We are also using AccuWeather, a service tailored to give us real-time data on conditions in Franklin.

## WHAT FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED WHEN MAKING THE DECISION TO CLOSE SCHOOL?

The safety of all district children is our primary concern in making our decision. In deciding whether children will be safe, we look at the following factors:

- Information on road conditions from the town's superintendent of roads and from the police
- Time snow starts to accumulate, and the amount of snow expected
- Weather predictions as to what is expected later in the day
- Building conditions (e.g. whether we have power and heat)
- Parking lot conditions
- Temperature and wind-chill
- The Department of Public Works prediction as to when roads, Walkways and parking lots will be cleared
- Parents retain the right to not send a child to school if they feel road conditions are not safe.



## WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with DPW, the Highway Department, police and the Director of Facilities will make the decision.



## WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

The Superintendent must make the decision at the earliest possible time so that radio and TV stations can be notified. Many times the most important information is given at the 5:30 A.M. newscasts, since conditions could have changed overnight. The Superintendent will start the notification process of parents and staff as soon as possible with a target time of 5:30 A.M.

## HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

We use Regroup as our inclement weather notification system. Parents and school district staff will receive messages via phones and/or email about the status of school opening/closing during inclement weather situations. **Phone calls will be made beginning at 5:30 A.M. If you do not wish to receive a phone call early in the morning, please contact your child's school to remove your number from our Regroup system.** Tune to the following stations for up-to-date information on school closings. Do not call the school unless it is an emergency.

**Television: Channels 25(Fox), 4 (WBZ), 5 (WCVB), 7(WHDH), NECN and 10 (WJAR NBC)-R/**

**Radio Stations: WBZ (1030 AM), WMRC (1490 AM)**

**Blackboard Connect: Please keep your contact information current at your child's school**



### WHAT IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY?

The safety of your child is first and foremost! The Franklin Public Schools cover a large amount of geography with terrain variations. Conditions can change suddenly. **On days when the weather is questionable but the schools are open, please feel free to exercise your parental discretion to keep your child home. Teachers will be flexible in accepting late work under such conditions. Parents of young drivers please reinforce inclement weather driving skills with your child:**

- **Leave earlier**
- **Reduce speed**
- **Leave extra car lengths**
- **Do not worry about being late**



Parents of drivers can choose to drive their child or they may take a school bus. (Bus routes are on the district web site under "I Want" "Transportation Info")

Also, please be advised that emails to our office are public records. We want feedback, but in a respectful manner. We realize that our decisions will disappoint some of our community members and please understand that our concern is safety.

### WHAT ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE SIDEWALKS?

During and after any snowstorm, clearing the roads and parking lots are the town's first priority. Second in priority is the clearing of the sidewalks. Ideally, both roads and sidewalks will be sufficiently clear of snow before we will open. However, please be aware that schools may be open before sidewalks are clear. There may, however, be some days when sidewalks will have snow cover that students will have to walk through on their way to school. Sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the DPW and due to the large number of sidewalks; it may take up to a week to clear them. Parents must exercise their discretion on how students will arrive/depart from school. In the event of excessive snow, we implement emergency transportation for walkers – see website for information.



### THE CANCELATION DILEMMA

The decision to hold or cancel school on a day of inclement weather is always a difficult one. When we cancel school on a winter snow day, it means our students rejoice but parents may have childcare issues and ultimately, we have to add another day of school onto our June calendar. If we hold school on a difficult weather day, that may cause some students to miss school or to slip on snow and ice and get hurt on their way to or from school. Weather prediction is an uncertain science when you live in New England. However, getting snow in winter is almost guaranteed. Since we will let the safety of our children guide our decision-making with regard to snow days, we ask all parents to make emergency alternative childcare arrangements should the day come when the children have no school or school is delayed.



### MAKE-UP DAYS

As per school attendance regulations, students must attend school for a minimum of 180 days and the school year must end by June 30th. If snow days exceed these days, we will adjust the school calendar to use school vacation time to make up days.



### POWER OUTAGES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Snowstorms, Nor'easters and Hurricanes may negatively impact the ability of utility companies to restore power in a timely manner. If all schools have power, we endeavor to open school. However, other factors also influence the decision. Debris (trees, downed lines and safe routes to school) are impacted by road conditions. Also, a number of homes without power may influence the decision to open or close schools. As with all our decision making, school officials consult with Public Safety leaders to make the best decision within the framework of the information available.

Thank you for planning in advance.

*Maureen Sabolinski, Ed. D.*

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