



LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Kimberly Merrick, Superintendent
Henry C. Maimin, School Business Administrator
Ellen Farris, Director of Student Services

As we approach the winter months, it seems appropriate to review our procedures for school closures, delayed openings, and the early dismissal of students that may result from severe weather. It's important to note that the safety of all of our students and staff is paramount as we make decisions for the Lenox Public School District in response to weather that can be difficult to predict and/ or change quickly as is often the case in New England. Although we understand that many of our students choice to Lenox and reside in neighboring districts, decisions regarding school closing are based on the weather in Lenox.

1. **Decision-Making Process**

When severe weather is forecast, we remain in close contact with other Town Departments such as the Department of Public Works and Lenox Police/Fire Departments to assess the conditions of roads and sidewalks and to coordinate activity. Similarly, local superintendents check in with each other to compare conditions across the area. More than likely, a final decision to close school or have a delayed opening will not be made until the early morning hours, typically by 5AM. There are times when an early release of school may be required in the event, for example, of a storm intensifying mid-day that would make our regular dismissal hazardous. In that case, we would base the early dismissal time on the amount of time needed for our buses to complete their routes for both schools. All buses will run their regular routes based on an adjusted delayed opening or early dismissal time. Any time hazardous weather is in the forecast, we encourage parents and staff to plan in advance for child-care coverage to ensure they are prepared for any contingency.

2. **Communications**

We recognize that timely communications are essential when planning for severe weather. Our school notification system has proven to be invaluable in disseminating both emergency and non-emergency messages to our parents and staff. Once a closure or delayed opening decision is made, we will use our message system to broadcast that message out to our community via phone, text message and email in a process that takes only a few minutes. It's important to note that our message system draws from contact information that parents/guardians provide to LPS at the start of each school year. If your phone or email address changes during the school year, please contact your child's school directly to update. Because severe weather can sometimes mean the loss of power and/or phone service, an emergency message through our message system will be sent to families and staff via email, and the home/cell numbers provided to LPS. While this may result in families receiving multiple messages in the early morning hours, we hope everyone appreciates the necessity of this redundancy. In addition to our message system, emergency notifications will also be posted on the District Website and sent to the local media.

3. **School Calendar**

Students in Massachusetts are required to attend school for 180 days each year. School districts are also required to adopt a 185-day calendar each year to allow for weather-related and other emergencies that may close school. In the event that a school district exceeds five "snow days," additional days must be made up either during the year or at the conclusion of the adopted calendar.

6 Walker Street, Lenox, MA 01240 * Phone: 413-637-5550 * Fax: 413-637-5559 * Web: www.lenoxps.org

Non-discrimination and equal opportunity are the policy of the Lenox Public Schools in all of its educational programs, activities, and employment practices. No person shall be discriminated against or excluded from participation or workplace advancement on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, limited English proficiency, housing status, or disability.