

New Paltz Central School District

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

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Public Announcements

Emergency conditions may necessitate closing of school for the day, opening late, or dismissing school early. The following radio/television stations will be notified and asked to make public announcements regarding emergency school closings.

- **WBNR/WSPK 104.7 FM, Poughkeepsie**
- **WBWZ (Z93) FM 93.3, Highland**
- **WCZX FM 97.7, Poughkeepsie**
- **WDST FM 100.1, Woodstock**
- **WELV AM 1370, Ellenville**
- **WELV FM 99.3, Ellenville**
- **WEOK AM 1390, Poughkeepsie**
- **WGHQ FM 92, Kingston**
- **WGNY AM 1200, Newburgh**
- **WGNY FM 104.1, Newburgh**
- **WHUD FM 100.7, Peekskill**
- **WKIP AM 1450, Poughkeepsie**
- **WKNY AM 1490, Kingston**
- **WPDH FM 101.5, Poughkeepsie**
- **WRNQ (Q92) FM 92.1, Poughkeepsie**
- **WRRV FM 92.7, Middletown**
- **WRWD FM 107.3, Highland**
- **WKZE FM 98.1, Red Hook**
- **WPKF FM 96.1 Dutchess & Ulster**
- **WKXP FM 94.3 Poughkeepsie**
- **WZAD FM 97.3 Poughkeepsie**
- **WRNN Television, Kingston**
- **SCN TV Albany**
- **WNBC TV New York**
- **FOX 5 TV New York**
- **WRNN TV Kingston**

OR

Local Access TV Channel 17 for Town or Village of New Paltz Time Warner Cable Subscribers

OR

On the homepage of the New Paltz School District website, www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us

Guidelines & Procedures

The guidelines and procedures presented in this notice will be followed except in very unique circumstances which would cause school officials to take alternate action. You are asked to familiarize yourself with these procedures.

GUIDELINES USED TO MAKE THE DECISION

1. **SURFACES:** Road conditions, school driveways, and parking lots need to be declared safe for use by the responsible governmental units.
2. **ICE:** Surfaces must be sanded. It is expected that buses will not end the routes with the sanded surface covered by new icing.
3. **TEMPERATURE:** When the temperature is below -15 degrees Fahrenheit at 5:15 AM, 15 minutes prior to the time at which the final decision is made, the school will delay.
4. **WIND CHILL:** When the wind chill factor is predicted to be below -25 degrees Fahrenheit at 5:15 AM, 15 minutes prior to the time at which the final decision is made, the school will delay. The district will use the wind chill factor provided by the professional weather service contractor.
5. When a storm arrives after school starts, the schools will remain open unless a heavy snowfall is predicted to continue into the afternoon hours. If this is the case, then the schools may close earlier. The transportation department will notify the radio stations of early dismissal times. Lunches will be served prior to dismissal whenever possible.

Road Clearing Cycles

The following information will help you understand the reasons for delays, as well as limiting early dismissal of students. The towns have indicated it takes from four to seven hours to prepare roads for safe travel. The difference in times is based upon the miles of roads in each town.

The towns prefer not to have the buses on the roads while the plows and sanders are working. Many town roads are approximately 14 feet wide. A plow with its wing out covers 11 feet of the road surface. A town vehicle meeting an oncoming bus has a difficult time getting by the bus. Moreover, a bus approaching a town vehicle sanding or plowing steep hills is hazardous to both vehicles.

The towns have requested that the school district consider the fact that the duration of a road clearing cycle to ensure passable roads is important for all vehicles using town roads, not just school vehicles. The towns would like delays and early dismissals to reflect the factors of road width, terrain, and the time to complete one cycle.

Only two-hour delays or closings are planned. A one-hour delay does not allow everyone enough time to fully prepare to open school.

When two-hour delays occur, there will be NO SCHOOL for students in buildings that have PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES or EARLY DISMISSALS scheduled that afternoon.

How Does This Process Work?

The emergency delay and school closing process begins by 4:00 AM when poor weather is predicted. First, transportation employees ride the roads to determine existing road conditions. Then, the district contacts the town highway departments for status reports.

At approximately 5:15 AM, transportation employees meet to discuss the condition of the roads as they saw them. The supervisor of transportation to report the condition of the roads as they saw them in the last hour. At that point, the supervisor of transportation contacts the superintendent of schools.

By 5:30 AM, the decision to delay or close must be made because the first bus runs start shortly thereafter. The Superintendent of Schools and the Supervisor of Transportation call the radio and television stations to speak with media personnel, or leave messages on the answering machine if no one is available, regarding the decision to close schools or delay the opening of schools. By 5:45 AM, the internal district notification process begins. **All student activities at the schools are cancelled for the day if school is closed.**

Predicting road conditions up to three hours before the last bus arrival is not an exact decision on any given day. However, New Paltz is one of only a handful of districts using such an extensive process of checking the roads for safety. Eight local agencies plus Ulster County Department of Transportation and New York State Department of Transportation manage the roads used by our school buses in the following towns and villages: Gardiner, New Paltz, Rosendale, Esopus, Lloyd, Plattekill, Rochester, and the Village of New Paltz. Local highway budgets vary by area and determine the type of action available to a local government. Questions about a particular road should be addressed to the correct agency.

Diesel Fuel & Cold Weather Do Not Mix Well

Diesel fuel is most commonly used in buses. Its major drawback is poor performance in very cold weather. When the temperature drops below -20 degrees Fahrenheit, the fuel can form into a gel that looks like what we know as Vaseline. The gel collects in the fuel filter and stops the fuel from reaching the engine. The bus can run several miles before the gel blocks the flow of fuel. This is why buses sometimes stop in the middle of a run. Additives are used in diesel fuel in cold weather to help keep the fuel flowing, but are not always effective.