Weather Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find emergency announcements?

What are the possible choices for weather closings?

How do I find out if facilities are open?

How do I find out if a particular event is canceled or postponed due to inclement weather?

How is the decision made to close schools?

Why aren't schedule change announcements made sooner?

Do you understand how inconvenient it is to arrange child care at the last minute?

What happens when the number of school days lost due to inclement weather exceeds the number of days planned in the school year calendar?

What about extra-curricular activities when school is cancelled?

Why does it take so long to get schools back to a normal operating schedule following a weather event?

Who is responsible for clearing sidewalks and walkways?

Can I elect to keep my child home even if schools are open? Will this be an excused absence?

In the case of a delayed opening, is the school day extended?

Is there an announcement when there ISN'T a delay or closing due to inclement weather?

Are announcements made on days that school is not in session, including weekends and student holidays?

What should NHCS employees do when a school closing is announced?

Where can I find emergency announcements?
Emergency closing information for New Hanover County Schools is available through these outlets:

- The NHCS homepage, www.nhcs.net (click on "Emergency Announcements" at the top).
- TV Stations: WECT-TV6, WWAY-TV3 and News 14 Carolina
- Radio Stations: Cumulus (WWQQ, WGNI, WMNX and WKXS), Next Media (WMFD, WSFM, WAZO, WKXB, SRQR, WILT), Sea-Com Media (The Bone, The Big Talker FM, The Penguin), WHQR
- The NHCS hotline, (910) 254-4411.
- The AlertNow notification system. Parents should make sure the school your child attends has your current contact information.

What are the possible choices for weather closings?

NHCS has several schedules set up to deal with inclement weather; these are put into effect when conditions threaten the safety of children who are walking or riding school buses to schools. These schedules are:

- Keep schools closed.
- Open two hours late.
- Close two hours early.

The procedures used in school closings are detailed at the inclement weather plans page.

How do I find out if facilities are open?

The lack of an emergency message means facilities are normally open. Unless there is an announcement posted on the NHCS emergency announcements website (www.nhcs.net), the hotline (910 254-4411), and area radio and television stations, NHCS facilities are operating on a normal schedule.

How do I find out if a particular event is canceled or postponed due to inclement weather?

The NHCS emergency announcement page will carry some level of detail for countywide programs such as field trips and before and after school programs. For other events, contact the event organizer. Many have blanket policies such as canceling an activity if schools are closed or delayed.

How is the decision made to close schools?

Decisions on whether to close our schools are not taken lightly. All decisions take the safety of all NHCS children into account. Complete details on the decision-making process have been posted.

We rely on information from emergency management and state highway administrators about conditions for all roads--not just major highways. NHCS personnel assigned to different regions of the county go out and inspect the conditions of roads, sidewalks and NHCS parking lots and bus lanes. The Superintendent also confers with other area school systems before announcing his decision.

To view a video clip that explains school closings:

> Video: Inclement Weather Closing Decisions
> Examines how NHCS administrators make the decision to delay or close schools during inclement weather.

Why aren't schedule change announcements made sooner?

NHCS policy is to announce school closings and delayed openings by 5:30 a.m. We try to make closing or late opening decisions as early as possible. The timing of the decision remains secondary to the safety issues.

NHCS administrators rely on information from emergency management and state highway administrators about conditions for all roads. Our safety office also communicates with the national weather service to receive up-to-the-minute weather forecasts. Storm tracks can change at any time, significantly affecting the outcome on our area. For this reason, our administrators usually wait until early in the morning to see what really does occur instead of making a decision based upon a forecast.

Do you understand how inconvenient it is to arrange child care at the last minute?

Yes, we do! Parents are urged to make arrangements now for the care of their children when schedule changes are made (and to provide for the rare situation when it is necessary to close an individual school because of a power failure or other circumstances). Children should know where to go if a parent will not be home.

What happens when the number of school days lost due to inclement weather exceeds the number of days planned in the school year calendar?

The Superintendent and the School Board are responsible for developing and implementing a plan to make up for days missed. We make it up on workdays, spring break, vacation, Saturdays or extend the school year.

What about extra-curricular activities when school is cancelled?

All extra-curricular activities are cancelled whenever school is cancelled.

Why does it take so long to get schools back to a normal operating schedule following a weather event?

School personnel work diligently to reopen schools as quickly as possible. The safety of our students is our first consideration. Streets and sidewalks, in the county, need to be cleared of water and debris to allow bus access and for the safety of students following a tropical storm or hurricane.

Who is responsible for clearing sidewalks and walkways?

It is the responsibility of each individual building custodian to clear the sidewalks in front of the school. It is the responsibility of homeowners and businesses to clear the sidewalks in front of their properties. Other publicly used sidewalks are handled by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Can I elect to keep my child home even if schools are open? Will this be an excused absence?

Parents may decide to keep their children home. Parents need to contact their children's schools to determine if the absence will be excused.

In the case of a delayed opening, is the school day extended?

No. Schools dismiss at their normal times, even if they opened with a one or two hour delay. The exception to this policy is for elementary schools that normally close early on Mondays. If the delayed opening occurs on a Monday, these elementary schools will close on their regular Tuesday-Friday schedule.

Is there an announcement when there ISN'T a delay or closing due to inclement weather?

No announcement is made when schools are operating on a normal schedule.

Are announcements made on days that school is not in session, including weekends and student holidays?

NHCS facilities are in use even when school is not in session. An announcement is made any time facilities are not available on normal schedules. This includes weekends and student holidays. If no announcement is made, facilities are operating on normal schedules.

What should NHCS employees do when a school closing is announced?

Employees of NHCS should check the website or with their principal or department director for more information.