

1 **SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL REGULATIONS**
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3 The primary concern of the Alexandria City School Board in the event of inclement weather, a
4 building systems failure or other emergencies is the ability of students and staff to safely access
5 school facilities. In such situations, the Superintendent is empowered to determine whether
6 ACPS schools and/or offices shall be closed, delayed or dismissed early. In addition to safety
7 and welfare, the decision will be based on the ability to effectively deliver the educational
8 program, as well as any other considerations deemed relevant by the Superintendent.
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10 **I. DEFINITIONS**
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- 12 A. Habitability: Indoor conditions that may impact the ability of students and staff to
13 safely occupy ACPS facilities.
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- 15 B. Building Systems Failure: A heating, cooling, water, power, gas or other
16 unanticipated systems malfunction that severely impacts the ability of students and
17 staff to safely occupy an ACPS facility.
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- 19 C. Loss of Resources: The loss of external resources vital to the operation of ACPS
20 facilities, such as power, water or sewer. Examples include, but are not limited to
21 power outages or water main breaks, etc.
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23 **II. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**
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25 Decisions regarding school closures, delayed opening and early dismissal will be made as
26 early as possible in order to ensure the safety of ACPS students and staff members and to
27 provide parents, staff members, city agencies and community partners with timely
28 notification.
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- 30 A. Relevant department heads, in consultation with affected administrators appropriate
31 to the situation, shall be responsible for recommending to the Superintendent that
32 individual schools, all schools, individual offices and/or all offices be closed, delayed
33 or dismissed early under this regulation.
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- 35 B. The Office of Educational Facilities shall follow established procedures and best
36 practices regarding habitability when assessing building systems failures that may
37 impact school openings or closure.
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- 39 C. Principals or designees shall have the flexibility to move students to other rooms or
40 other appropriate areas within the school facility in the event of a building systems
41 failure.
42
- 43 D. The recommendation to close, delay opening, or dismiss schools and/or offices early
44 will be made in consultation with various offices and will include many factors,
45 including but not limited to:
46 1. Reviewing forecast and current weather conditions, outdoor temperature readings
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48 and forecast and current heat index readings. (Further guidance on National
49 Weather Service advisories and air quality is available in Regulation JHCF-R);

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51
52 2. Conducting on-road observations of actual road and weather conditions across the
53 city;
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55 3. Conferring with other local and state agencies to determine if a snow emergency
56 plan is or will be issued;
- 57
58 4. Inspecting school driveways, parking lots and sidewalks; and
- 59
60 5. Assessing the conditions of school buildings, including but not limited to heating,
61 electrical, plumbing or temperature readings in classrooms.
- 62
63 E. ACPS remains in regular communication with City agencies and community partners
64 when considering delayed openings, early dismissals and closures.
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66 **III. FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN DETERMINING SCHOOL CLOSURES,**
67 **DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY DISMISSAL**

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69 • Safety and Welfare of Students/Staff
70 • Weather
71 • Transportation
72 • Building Systems Failures/Habitability
73 • Loss of Resources
74 • Alternative Accommodation
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76 **IV. SCHOOL/OFFICE CLOSURES, DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY DISMISSAL**
77 **DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES**

78
79 A. All-Day Closing of Schools

- 80
81 1. All schools shall be closed for the day.
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- 83 2. The following programs and activities shall be cancelled:
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- 85
86 a) All before- and after-school activities and school-sponsored events;
87 b) All field trips, except as outlined below;
88 c) All extended day learning programs;
89 d) All before- and after-school child care programs (DRPCA and The Campagna
90 Center make closure determinations independent of ACPS);
91 e) All high school and middle school athletic practices and games;
92 f) All school-based staff meetings and professional development activities
93 scheduled in schools;
94 g) All planned use of facilities and grounds by non-ACPS organizations; an
95 h) Any planned event that is determined by the Superintendent to require
96 cancellation under the circumstances.
97

98 3. All meetings and professional development activities held in ACPS facilities that
99 include 10-month employees shall be cancelled.

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101 4. The Superintendent shall decide whether students may participate in pre-approved
102 foreign travel, out-of-state, statewide and/or regional events that are scheduled
~~103~~
104 outside of ACPS facilities.

105
106 B. All-Day Closing of Offices

107
108 1. All offices shall be closed for the day.

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110 2. Essential personnel shall report to work as outlined in Section VII of this
111 regulation.

112
113 3. All meetings and professional development activities in ACPS offices shall be
114 cancelled.

115
116 C. Delayed Openings of Schools

117
118 1. Students in Grades K-12 and the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) program shall
119 report for classes in accordance with the delayed opening announcement.

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121 2. Morning pre-K students (Early Childhood Special Education and Preschoolers
122 Learning Together) report in accordance with the delayed opening announcement
123 and may dismiss one hour later than usual;

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125 3. Afternoon pre-K students report in accordance with the delayed opening
126 announcement and are dismissed at the regular time;

127
128 4. The following programs and activities shall be cancelled:

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132 a) All before-school child care programs;

133 b) All morning school-based staff meetings and professional development
134 activities;

135 c) All morning field trips; and

136 d) Any planned event that is determined by the Superintendent to require
137 cancellation under the circumstances.

138
139 5. After-school activities and events will not be affected by a delayed opening.

140
141 D. Delayed Openings of Offices

142
143 1. School offices and Central Office will open on time, except when otherwise
144 provided in the delayed opening announcement.

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147 a) Employees shall follow the delayed opening guidelines as outlined in Section
148 VII of this regulation.

149 b) All meetings and professional development activities shall be cancelled,

150 unless provisions have been made by the meeting coordinator for a delayed
151 start time.

152

153 E. Early Dismissal of Schools

154

155 1. All students in Grades K-12 shall be dismissed in accordance with the early
156 dismissal announcement.

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158 2. Morning pre-K will generally be dismissed at 11:00 am (depending on the time of
159 the announcement).

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161 3. The following programs and activities shall be cancelled:

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164 a) Afternoon pre-kindergarten classes depending on the time of dismissal;

165 b) All afternoon field trips, except as outlined in this regulation;

166 c) All extended day learning programs;

167 d) All after-school school-based staff meetings and professional development
168 activities scheduled in schools;

169 e) All after-school activities and school-sponsored events;

170 f) All high school and middle school athletic practices and games;

171 g) Planned used of facilities by non-ACPS organizations (**DRPCA and The
172 Campagna Center make closure and early dismissal determinations
173 independent of ACPS**); and

174 h) Any planned event that is determined by the Superintendent to require
175 cancellation under the circumstances.

176

177 4. The Superintendent shall decide whether students may participate in pre-approved
178 foreign travel, out-of-state, statewide and/or regional events that are scheduled
179 outside of ACPS facilities.

180

181 5. School offices and Central Office will remain open, unless the Superintendent has
182 approved the early dismissal of offices.

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185 a) Employees shall follow the early dismissal guidelines as outlined in this
186 regulation.

188 b) All meetings and professional development activities held in ACPS facilities
189 that include 10-month employees shall be cancelled.

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191 6. Decisions to cancel School Board meetings will be made separately by the School
192 Board leadership in collaboration with the Superintendent.

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194 F. Cancellation of Evening and After-school Activities when Schools are not Closed for
195 the Day or Dismissed Early

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197 1. When schools were not closed or dismissed early during the day, but inclement
198 weather or other emergency conditions exist or are forecast, the relevant
199 department heads will make a recommendation to the Superintendent on whether

200 evening and after-school activities should be cancelled.

201
202 2. If such an announcement is made, the following programs and activities shall be
203 cancelled:

- 204 a) All extended-day learning programs;
- 205 ~~206~~ b) All after-school school-based staff meetings and professional development
209 activities;
- 210 c) All after-school activities and school-sponsored events;
- 211 d) All high school and middle school athletic practices and games;
- 212 e) Planned use of facilities by non-ACPS organizations (**DRPCA and The**
213 **Campagna Center make closure and early dismissal determinations**
214 **independent of ACPS); and**
- 215 f) Any planned event that is determined by the Superintendent to require
216 cancellation under the circumstances.

217
218
219 3. The Superintendent shall decide whether students may participate in pre-approved
220 foreign travel, out-of-state, statewide and/or regional events that are scheduled
221 outside of ACPS facilities.

222
223 4. All evening meetings and professional development activities held in ACPS
224 facilities shall be cancelled.

225
226 5. Decisions to cancel School Board meetings will be made separately by the School
227 Board leadership in collaboration with the Superintendent.

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229 **G. Cancellation of Weekend Activities at ACPS Facilities**

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231 1. When schools are closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather or other
232 emergency conditions on a Friday, the Superintendent will consult with relevant
233 department heads to determine whether scheduled weekend activities and planned
234 use of facilities shall be held as planned or cancelled.

235
236 2. The Superintendent shall decide whether students may participate in pre-approved
237 foreign travel, out-of-state, statewide and/or regional events that are scheduled
238 outside of ACPS facilities.

239
240 **V. SCHOOL/OFFICE CLOSURES, DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY DISMISSAL**
241 **DUE TO BUILDING SYSTEMS FAILURE/HABITABILITY**

242
243 A. In the event of a building systems failure (including, but not limited to electric,
244 plumbing, water, or gas), the school principal shall consult with Office of Educational
245 Facilities staff, who will assess the condition of the building(s) and advise the Chief
246 Operating Officer of the findings.

247
248 B. The Superintendent, in consultation with relevant department heads appropriate to the
249 situation, will decide whether the school(s) or office(s) should be closed, delayed, or

250 dismissed early on a case-by-case basis.

251

252 C. If the Superintendent announces a school/office early dismissal due to a building
253 systems failure, he/she will consult with relevant department heads to determine
254 whether outdoor and/or offsite athletic practices or events will be cancelled as well.

255

256 D. The Office of Communications will begin the notification process to students, staff,
257 and families, as well as to city agencies, relevant community partners, and media
258 outlets when applicable.

259

260 E. When a closure, delayed opening or early dismissal results from a building systems
261 failure, the operating status for programs/activities in ACPS facilities follow the same
262 guidelines as when a closure or delayed opening results from inclement weather or an
263 emergency, and are found in Section IV of this regulation,

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265 F. Employees shall follow the attendance and reporting guidelines as outlined in Section
266 VII of this regulation.

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268 **VI. NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF**

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270 A. The Office of Communications coordinates all emergency communication and serves
271 as the liaison between the schools and the public/media. As such, it is responsible for
272 initiating all school closure, delayed opening and early dismissal announcements,
273 including divisionwide notifications and media bulletins.

274

275 B. School closings, delayed opening and early dismissal announcements will be
276 communicated as soon as possible following a decision by the Superintendent to
277 close, delay or dismiss schools and/or offices early.

278

279 C. Announcements are typically communicated through multiple platforms. However, in
280 cases of emergency or circumstances beyond ACPS' control, not all of the following
281 communication channels may be used:

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- ACPS website;
- ACPS Social Media (Twitter and Facebook);
- ACPS Social Media en español (Twitter and Facebook);
- ACPS e-mail and text message alerts (translated into Spanish, Arabic and Amharic when logistically possible);
- City of Alexandria eNews (www.alexandriava.gov/eNews);
- ACPS information hotline (703-866-5300);
- ACPS TV, Channel 71 in the City of Alexandria;
- Local radio and television stations; and
- Divisionwide phone notification as deemed appropriate.

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295 D. If schools and/or offices are closing for the day or there is a delayed opening due to
296 inclement weather, notification will be made as early as possible.

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VII. EMPLOYEE WORK SCHEDULES DURING SCHOOL/OFFICE CLOSURES, DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY DISMISSAL

A. All-Day Closing of Schools

1. Alexandria City Public Schools employees should adhere to the following guidelines when schools are closed for the day due to emergencies such as inclement weather, a building systems failure, or loss of resources.

When schools and administrative offices are closed the following essential personnel report:

- Executive Director of Facilities and Operations
- Director of Pupil Transportation and Fleet Management
- Director of Educational Facilities
- Director of Safety and Security Services
- Coordinator of Security and Emergency Operations
- Security personnel
- Director of Maintenance and Custodial Services
- Assistant Director of Maintenance and Custodial Services
- Maintenance Shop Supervisor
- Building Systems Manager
- Building Services Manager
- Building Engineers
- Custodians (except casual workers)
- Maintenance Shop employees

2. When schools are closed and administrative offices are open during the emergencies listed above, all school office and Central Office employees report and liberal leave is in effect.

3. **When schools are closed (but city services remain open) due to public health emergencies** based on the recommendation of the Alexandria Health Department, the following essential personnel report (on a modified schedule):

- Executive Director of Facilities and Operations
- Director of Safety and Security Services
- Coordinator of Security and Emergency Operations
- Security personnel
- Director of Maintenance and Custodial Services
- Assistant Director of Maintenance and Custodial Services
- Maintenance Shop Supervisor
- Building Systems Manager
- Building Services Manager

- 342 • Building Engineers
- 343 • Custodians (except casual workers)
- 344 • Maintenance Shop employees

345
346 Other personnel (including contract employees) will work remotely (as directed
347 by their supervisor to perform the employee’s regular duties). **Employees may be**
348 **required to report on-site on an as-needed basis by the employee’s**
349 **Department Director.**

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351 4. **When schools are closed due to a citywide quarantine** based on the
352 recommendation of the Alexandria Health Department, the following essential
353 personnel report (on a modified schedule):

- 354
- 355 • Director of Safety and Security Services
- 356 • Security personnel

357
358 Other personnel (including contract employees) will work remotely (as directed
359 by their supervisor to perform the employee’s regular duties). **Employees may be**
360 **required to report on-site on an as-needed basis by the employee’s**
361 **Department Director.**

362
363 B. All-Day Closing of Offices

- 364
- 365 1. All essential personnel (as listed above) report at the regular time.
- 366
- 367 2. School office and Central Office employees do not report to work.
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369 C. Delayed Openings of Schools

- 370
- 371 1. All essential personnel (as listed above) report at the regular time.
- 372
- 373 2. All non-essential personnel report 1-2 hours later than their regular time in
374 accordance with the delayed opening announcement.
- 375
- 376 3. Bus drivers/bus monitors report 1-2 hours later than their regular time for morning
377 runs in accordance with the delayed opening announcement, unless otherwise
378 directed.
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380 D. Early Dismissal of School(s)/Office(s)

- 381
- 382 1. All essential personnel (as listed above) remain at work according their regular
383 schedule.
- 384
- 385 2. In consultation with the Superintendent and/or Central Office administrators, non-
386 administrative licensed staff, paraprofessionals and school security officers will
387 be released after students have been dismissed and buses have departed. If

388 needed, principals may require some staff to remain to supervise students until all
389 students have left the premises. All other daytime staff are expected to work a
390 regular day, unless otherwise instructed by the Superintendent or designee. Night
391 personnel report at their regular time or take leave with a supervisor's approval
392 (unless otherwise instructed). Bus drivers/bus monitors report two hours earlier
393 than their regular time for afternoon runs, unless otherwise directed.
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396 Established: April 21, 2016
397 Revised: June 21, 2018
398 Revised: March 13, 2020
399 Revised: February 4, 2021

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401 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-70, 22.1-78, 22.1-98.
402

403 Cross Refs.: EBCD School Closures and Essential Personnel
404 GAA Staff Time Schedules
405 GCBD Staff Leaves and Absences
406 GCBD-R Staff Leaves and Absences Regulations
407 JHCF-R Wellness Guidelines for the Alexandria City Public
408 Schools