

WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Phone# (856) 848-4300 · Fax# (856) 845-5743
www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us

Emergency School Closing Information

West Deptford Township Schools School Closing Number #804 (Gloucester County)

Closing School for a Snow Day: How is the decision made?

Dear Parents and Guardians:

District staff understands that our decision to open or close schools in bad weather has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are better served – both academically and socially – by being in school. But as always, our top priority is the safety of our students.

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?

Please understand that we make the decision to close or delay the opening of schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- Information on road conditions from staff and from the police. We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the District. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the District may be dangerous. Also, we must consider that some High School students drive to school.
- Amount of snow and ice accumulated.
- Whether precipitation is continuing.
- Building conditions (such as whether we have electricity and heat).
- Parking lot conditions. Administrators talk to maintenance and custodial staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots and sidewalks.
- Temperature and wind chill. Please remember that some of our students walk to school.
- Weather predictions. We prefer not making our decision based on weather predictions, which are not always accurate. But sometimes this is unavoidable.
- What other school Districts are doing. We also share information with other local Districts and check whether they are opening or closing.

WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As Superintendent of Schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based on the above factors and recommendations from the staff and the West Deptford Police Department.

PRIDE, PASSION, AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

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HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

In the event of a closing, the School Messenger communication system will be used to notify parents. Depending on your personal notifications settings, families may receive any combination of phone calls, SMS text and email messages. Notifications are also sent via the District Website, Twitter, and the West Deptford Schools custom app.

Tune to Television Channels 6, 10, 29, or listen to 1060 AM on your radio for up-to-date information on school closings. Our school number is 804. You can also check our District Website (www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us) for information. Do not call the school unless it is an emergency.

WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

I generally make the decision by 5:00 a.m. or earlier so we can notify radio and TV stations and post the decision on our website. If I wait longer to announce a closing, some parents will have already left for work, leaving their children unsupervised.

WILL WE CLOSE SCHOOL IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?

Keep in mind that, even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering students. Once we make the decision to open the schools, many parents rely on it and leave for work. If we then send students right back home, many will return to empty houses. If conditions get worse during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give adequate notice to all parents first.

Although my staff and I do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel as though it is safe for your child to attend school, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Also, discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives if weather conditions worsen.

We hope that this explanation helps everyone understand the process that our District staff uses to make the best possible decision for all in our District. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at gcappello@wdeptford.k12.nj.us.

Sincerely,

Gregory Cappello
Superintendent of Schools