



# THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JOEL I. KLEIN, *Chancellor*

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR  
52 Chambers Street - New York, NY 10007

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Superintendents, Local Instructional Superintendents, Superintendent of District 75, Superintendent of Alternative High Schools And Programs, Directors of Regional Operations Centers, Heads of Divisions and Offices, Principals of All Day Schools, UFT Chapter Leaders, UFT, CSA, And DC 37 District Representatives, And PTA/PA Presidents

FROM: **LaVerne Evans Srinivasan**   
Deputy Chancellor For Operations

**Benjamin B. Tucker**   
Chief Executive, Office of School Safety And Planning

SUBJECT: Reissuance of Procedures For School Closings And Delayed School Openings In The Case Of Storm Days Or Other Citywide Emergency Conditions

DATE: August 22, 2003

## ABSTRACT

A citywide policy on storm day and other citywide emergency procedures for school closings and delayed school openings is necessary as a guide to students, parents and staff. The reissuance of this memorandum reaffirms the Chancellor's authority to announce the citywide closing or delayed opening of schools, and outlines the requirements and expectations that pertain to the dissemination of information on the Chancellor's announcement, the impact on pupil transportation, the school activities that should take place during any delayed school opening day, and the responsibilities of regional and central offices.

1. Citywide Announcement to Close or Delay the Opening of Schools
  - 1.1 The Chancellor will announce the citywide decision to close or delay the opening of schools during stormy weather or for other citywide emergency conditions after consultation with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, the Weather Bureau, the City Sanitation Department, and the City Transit Authority. The citywide decision will be made as early as possible prior to 6:00 a.m. on the affected day.

- 1.2 The Office of Communications and Media Relations will notify the news wire services, radio and television stations as soon as possible prior to 6:00 a.m. School staff and parents should be advised to listen to information broadcast by any of the following radio stations: WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WLIB (1190 AM), WBLS (107.5 FM), WNYE (91.5 FM), as well as the following television stations: WCBS (Channel 2), WNBC (Channel 4), WNYW (Fox Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), and "NY 1" (Channel 1 on cable television).
- 1.3 In all instances when the Chancellor's announcement is made to close or delay opening schools, the Office of Pupil Transportation will advise the bus companies.
- 1.4 It is expected that all Superintendents and schools will adhere to the Chancellor's citywide announcement to close or delay the opening of schools during stormy weather or for other citywide emergency conditions. **No schools may open late or close without the Chancellor's authorization.**
- 1.5 It is essential that all parents and students be informed of the contents of this Memorandum, including their school's contact person and telephone number. A sample letter to parents is attached that should be distributed to each student at the start of the school year so that parents will know the person to call in the school, and which media will carry the public announcements.

## 2. Extent and Scope of Authorized Citywide Delays in School Openings

- 2.1 In the case of an authorized delayed school opening, the Chancellor will announce a two hour opening delay citywide. In the following examples, the two-hour delayed opening would affect various existing start times citywide as follows:
  - A 7:50 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. session becomes 9:50 a.m. to 2:10 p.m.
  - An 8:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. session becomes 10:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
  - A 9:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. session becomes 11:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
  - An 8:20 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. session becomes 10:20 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- 2.2 In the case of schools on "back to back" (i.e., "end-to-end," or "split") or "overlapping" sessions, the two hour delay applies to the regular start time of **each starting** session scheduled for that day. As an example of a triple overlapping session in the same building, the changes would be:
  - An 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. session becomes 10:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m.
  - An 8:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. session becomes 10:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
  - A 9:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. session becomes 11:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- 2.3 Principals of all schools should inform parents as early as possible in the school year that, in the event of an authorized delayed school opening, regular school buses will run, but that the arrival times will be delayed by two hours to accommodate the authorized two hour delayed school opening (for bus service for dismissed students, see sections 4.1 and 4.2 below).
  - 2.4 Parents of children who have medical and/or health issues requiring nursing services during the school day should be advised to use their own discretion in consultation with the principals in sending their children to school on storm days or on days with other citywide emergency conditions.
  - 2.5 Parents of children with disabilities should also be advised to use their own discretion as to whether they will permit their children to ride to school on stormy days or on days with other citywide emergency conditions, recognizing that travel time will necessarily be longer and that there may be delays in the schedules of the morning trip to school and in the trip home in the afternoon.
  - 2.6 Parents must be reminded that their children will not be picked up when nurses or paraprofessionals who are required to ride with them are not aboard their school buses.
  - 2.7 It is essential that parents and staff be made aware that, in all instances of an approved and authorized delayed school opening, all field trips, after-school transportation and after-school programs will be cancelled.
  - 2.8 Concerning half day prekindergarten programs within public schools, the morning (a.m.) session will be cancelled for students, but all staff are to report as indicated In Section 3.1 below.
3. School Activities During the Day of an Authorized Citywide Delayed School Opening
- 3.1 All school staff have the responsibility and obligation to report to work as early as possible but not later than the later starting time on a day with an authorized two hour delayed opening. Regular attendance reporting standards apply (absences, latenesses) **based on the later starting time**. These regular standards include the principal's discretion in approving or denying extraordinary Transportation Delay Forms for staff (OP201) contingent upon, as applicable, confirmation of delays by the Transit Authority, Department of Transportation or other agencies involved with the specific cause of delay (again, based on the later starting time).
  - 3.2 It is expected that the school building will be prepared to receive students and staff, and that the day will provide an effective instructional and feeding program.

- 3.3 The day is to be recorded as a day of regular instruction for purposes of reporting aggregate attendance for the Period Attendance Report (PAR) (except for pre-kindergarten a.m. session – see section 2.8 above; code R-46, “grade not in session,” should be used).
  - 3.4 A system wide indication for the authorized delayed opening will be automatically noted for schools utilizing the ATS System. Authorized delayed school openings due to weather or other citywide emergency conditions should be noted on the End-of-Year Teacher's “Affidavit” card for sites on a manual attendance recording system.
4. Dismissals from School on Delayed Opening Days
- 4.1 It is expected that schools will adhere to the regular dismissal time for that day. In the event that a storm or citywide emergency conditions worsen during the school day, the Chancellor will notify all Superintendents and radio and television media and bus services of an earlier dismissal schedule. **Superintendents and schools may not independently dismiss students early.**
  - 4.2 In the case of contract bus transportation, principals and staff are to remain in school with bused children until buses arrive for dismissal or until a parent or guardian arrives to take the children home. Parent notification must be ensured to the greatest extent possible.
  - 4.3 Parents should have been advised to inform their children to tell the teacher if no one will be at home in case of an authorized early dismissal.
  - 4.4 Parents should also be advised to discuss contingency plans with their children in case children are released early and parents are not at home to care for them. If possible, parents should make arrangements with a relative, friend, or neighbor who is at home during the day. Schools must ensure and verify that the relative, friend or neighbor is listed by the parent on the “Blue Emergency Contact Card,” and that these cards are up-to-date. Parents should be made aware that schools are not authorized to release pupils to persons not listed on the “Blue Emergency Contact Card.”
  - 4.5 Parents should be further advised to listen to any of the following radio stations to be informed of an early dismissal: WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WLIB (1190 AM), WBLS (107.5 FM), WNYE (91.5 FM), as well as the following television stations: WCBS (Channel 2), WNBC (Channel 4), WNYW (Fox Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), and "NY 1" (Channel 1 on cable television).

5.      Regional, Central, and District Offices

Unless the Chancellor instructs otherwise, central and regional offices, and the offices of District 75 and of Alternative High Schools and Programs, must remain open for **regular** hours on days when schools are authorized by the Chancellor to close or open late due to storm conditions or citywide emergency conditions, and staff must be in a position to provide essential information to parents and others.

6.      Questions

Superintendents should direct all questions regarding implementation of these procedures to Benjamin Tucker, Chief Executive for School Safety, at (212) 374-5164.

Superintendents should direct all questions concerning public announcements for authorized school closings or delayed openings to the Office of Communications and Media Relations, at (212) 374-5141.

Parents should direct all questions concerning authorized school closings or delayed openings to the relevant school (see attached sample letter to parents).

# SAMPLE

## SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS FOR PROCEDURES ON STORM DAYS OR ON DAYS WITH CITYWIDE EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

### SCHOOL HEADING SHOWING ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

RE: Procedures on Storm Days or on  
Days with Citywide Emergency Conditions

Dear Parent:

This letter is being sent to you to explain the procedures we follow in the case of a storm day or a day with citywide emergency conditions. The Chancellor will make an announcement to all schools in the city on whether to close schools or delay their opening. This announcement is made in consultation with other City officials. All authorized delayed openings will result in the regular starting time being two hours later.

By 6:00 a.m., the decision is announced on the following radio stations in the city: WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WLIB (1190 AM), WBLB (107.5 FM), WNYE (91.5 FM), as well as the following television stations: WCBS (Channel 2), WNBC (Channel 4), WNYW (Fox Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), and "NY 1" (Channel 1 on cable television).

The contact person at your school is: \_\_\_\_\_

The school telephone number to call is: \_\_\_\_\_

When there is a two hour delayed school opening, school buses will run, but their arrival times will be delayed by two hours. Morning prekindergarten programs within public schools will be cancelled, as well as all field trips, after-school transportation and after-school programs.

If you have a child with a disability, you should use your discretion in deciding whether to send him or her to school when there is a delayed opening. If your child has medical or other health issues requiring nursing or other services during the school day, including services requiring a nurse or paraprofessional to ride on the bus, you should consider not sending your child to school. Please be reminded that your child will not be picked up if a nurse or paraprofessional who is required to ride with him or her is not aboard the school bus.

It is expected that if schools open, students will be in school until their regular dismissal time. If your child takes a school bus, school staff will remain in school with the bused children until buses arrive for dismissal or until your child is picked up. However, if the storm or citywide emergency conditions worsen, the Chancellor may have to announce an early dismissal. The Chancellor will notify bus services of the earlier dismissal schedule. You should have plans in place with a relative, friend or neighbor in case your child is released early and you will not be at home to care for him or her. Please note that you must have listed that relative, friend or neighbor on the school's "Blue Emergency Contact Card" because schools are not authorized to release pupils to persons not listed on that card. You should make certain that the card is up-to-date. Your child should know of this plan. You should advise your child to tell the teacher if no one is at home at the time of an authorized early dismissal. Again, listen to the radio or television stations listed above for information. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Principal