

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR**

TO: ALL SUPERINTENDENTS, DEPUTY CHANCELLORS, CHIEF EXECUTIVES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, HEADS OF OFFICES, PRINCIPALS OF ALL DAY SCHOOLS, UFT CHAPTER LEADERS, UFT, CSA, AND DC 37 DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES, AND PTA/PA PRESIDENTS

FROM: BURTON SACKS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE  EXTERNAL RELATIONS

SUBJECT: REISSUANCE OF PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYED SCHOOL OPENINGS IN THE CASE OF STORM DAYS OR OTHER CITYWIDE EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

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 district 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 (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 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 district's contact person and telephone number. A sample letter to parents is attached that should be distributed to each student so that parents will know the person to call in the district and 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 9:30 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. session becomes 11:30 a.m. to 3:50 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 9:20 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. session becomes 11:20 a.m. to 3:40 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 as long as schools are kept open, 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 should be advised not to allow their children to board a bus when nurses who are required to ride with them are not aboard.
- 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 will be cancelled.
- 2.8 Concerning half day pre-kindergarten programs, 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 reported as a regular instructional day for purposes of reporting attendance (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. 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 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.
- 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 (Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), and "NY 1" (Channel 1 on cable television).

5. District and Central Offices

Unless the Chancellor instructs otherwise, district and central offices 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 Burton Sacks, Chief Executive for External Relations, at (718) 935-2799.

Superintendents should direct all questions concerning public announcements for authorized school closings or delayed openings to the Office of Communications and Media Relations, at (718) 935-4330.

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

BS:lp
Attachment

c: Joel Klein
Robin Brown
Daniel Carponcy