



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## MODIFICATION OF SCHOOL HOUR SCHEDULES

Delayed Openings

Schools Closed for the Day, Early Closings

Emergencies – Single/Several Schools

2565

Procedure No.

January 19, 2005

Date

I. **PURPOSE:** To provide the procedures for delaying the hour for school opening, for closing schools at an earlier hour than usual, for closing schools for an entire day or longer, and for providing alternative schools in emergency situations. (Refer to Bulletin B-10-02) **Principals are required to share these procedures with staff, students, and parents regarding late openings, early dismissals, and emergency relocations annually at the beginning of the school year.**

II. **BACKGROUND:** Certain events such as inclement weather, emergencies (such as power failures, no water, broken pipes, etc.), or other problems may make it advisable to modify the usual school opening or closing schedules or provide a temporary alternative facility for students. These procedures provide for the necessary authorizations to modify school schedules and provide for the communication of information to pupils, parents, and staff.

III. **INFORMATION:** Whenever decisions concerning early morning school closings or late openings are made by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designee, an announcement is then provided to approximately 38 radio stations and 8 television stations in the Washington metropolitan area. The goal is to contact the stations in time for early morning broadcasts which begin between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m. This information may also be accessed on the school system's web page at [www.pgcps.org](http://www.pgcps.org) and [www.schools-out.com](http://www.schools-out.com).

IV. **DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions apply to the contents of this procedure:

Delayed opening: Start of school two hours later than the usual time.

Schools closed for the day: Schools will not open at all.

Early closing: Dismissal of schools prior to the regular closing time.

Emergencies affecting single/several schools: Heating, cooling and/or ventilating equipment failures, power failures, broken water mains.

V. **PROCEDURES:**

A. Delayed opening of all schools:

1. CEO or designee will authorize.
2. If it is necessary to delay the opening of school because of inclement weather, dangerous road conditions or any other emergency which might arise, an announcement will be broadcast over the radio stations before 6:30 a.m. and posted on the web page(s). The announcement will refer to a two (2) hour delay.

Two-hour delay – Schools will begin two hours later than normal.

- a. There will be NO work-study transportation. (Those students should NOT report to school.)
- b. There will be no half-day Early Childhood Center (ECC), or Special Education Programs.



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- c. Any other school program requiring transportation prior to 12 noon will NOT have transportation, including Howard B. Owens Science Center.
  - d. All field trips will be cancelled.
  - e. Food Services will offer breakfast.
3. If no announcement is made, assume that schools will open according to schedule.
  4. Be sure parents, pupils, and staff are aware in advance of the operating changes associated with the two-hour delay.
  5. A delayed opening will have no effect on dismissal time.
- B. Closing of schools for an entire day:
1. The CEO, or designee, will authorize.
  2. Announcements will be made over the area radio/TV to this effect, as indicated in “A.2,” above, as well as posted on the web page(s).
- C. Early closings of all schools:
1. The CEO, or designee, will authorize.
  2. The announcement will be made prior to 10:15 a.m., if possible.
  3. Regional Assistant Superintendents and schools will be notified by the emergency communication system.
  4. When the announcement is made for early closing, be prepared to immediately announce your dismissal time.
  5. When schools have a two-hour early dismissal, all ECC half-day students will remain in school and be transported home with the regular afternoon dismissal.
  6. The following announcement will be made by the CEO when all schools will close early:  
“Due to the current weather conditions and the forecast for the remainder of the day, schools will close \_\_\_\_\_ hours early.”
  7. All after-school activities and events are to be cancelled, including athletic games and practices.
  8. Food Services will provide lunch.
- D. Emergencies affecting single schools or only a few schools:
1. Emergency situations caused by heating, ventilating, and air conditioning equipment failures, power failures, broken water mains, etc., may make it necessary to make modifications in the school hours or to provide a temporary alternate facility.



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2. Hot weather will not be recognized as a valid reason for closing all of our schools. Early dismissal for overheating conditions should be considered only in buildings with large windowless areas when air conditioning or ventilating equipment failures occur.
3. In the event of an emergency, the following procedure will be utilized:
  - a. In the event of a mechanical or electrical failure, which may require a span of time for repair, the principal should call the Maintenance Department, at 301-952-6500, for information such as the total scope of the problem and the anticipated repair time.
  - b. The principal should call the CEO and, if necessary, request permission to close the school or transfer the students to an alternative site. If the CEO cannot be reached, the Chief Administrator for Supporting Services should be contacted.
  - c. If the school is to be closed or students relocated to another site, the CEO will call the Regional Assistant Superintendent responsible for the school, the Transportation Department, Security Services, and Communications so that proper responses can be made by these offices. The CEO will also be notified of any actions taken.
  - d. Each elementary school will develop a plan in collaboration with the Regional Assistant Superintendent to relocate students to another building (e.g., area high school, middle school, or other system facility) in cases of short-term emergency situations such as no power, no water, pipe breakage, etc. This plan will be submitted to the appropriate Regional Assistant Superintendent for concurrence. This shall be explained to parents at the beginning of each school year both orally and in written communications sent home with students. The plans will reflect the following statements:
    - (1) Students will be picked up from the base school and transported to the alternate school for the day. They will be returned to their home school prior to normal dismissal time so that dismissal to their homes will follow regular routines, bus routes, etc.
    - (2) Arrangements for contingency activities while students are relocated.
    - (3) Confirmed arrangements for student lunch at the relocation facility.
- E. Other general instructions:
  1. A delayed school opening under procedures in "A" will have no automatic effect upon the dismissal time of a given facility.
  2. **Principals are reminded they are to obtain from parents, or guardians, a plan as to how children will be properly cared for if school is dismissed early. Principals are also encouraged to obtain emergency contact information from parents or guardians.**
  3. Should weather conditions become unstable, parents should be instructed to listen to radio and television stations for announcements concerning possible early school dismissal.
  4. When schools are closed for any emergency, professional personnel will be permitted to leave the building after student dismissal and their assigned responsibilities are met.



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These responsibilities and a schedule shall be developed by the Principal with the faculty in each school and submitted for approval to the appropriate administrative officer designated by the CEO. When an individual school is closed for an emergency, teachers will remain on duty unless the decision is made that the entire building is uninhabitable.

- VI. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** Administrative Procedure 2565.1, Employee Attendance During Inclement Weather and Other Emergency Conditions.
- VII. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 2565, dated December 1, 2002.
- VIII. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure originates with the Chief Administrator for Supporting Services and will be updated as necessary.
- IX. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 19, 2005.

Approved by:

André J. Hornsby  
Chief Executive Officer

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