



Tri-Valley Central School District

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Thomas W. Palmer, Superintendent

December 16, 2016

Dear School Community,

I always find it important to send this to our community on the importance of snow days, school closings and have an understanding of the importance and seriousness I take that role in making decisions that affect our schools

Snow Days, Two-Hour Delays and Early Dismissals

I thought it would be important to write about snow days and early dismissals and the thought processes that go into the decision making process of closing school.

We have seven *emergency days* built into our 2016-2017 calendar. Students are required to attend school for a minimum of 180 days in New York State so we take this into account when building *snow days* into the master calendar. We have contingent plans if we need to cancel school beyond the seventh day; we are required to make-up days in the calendar. You can see that information on the Academic Calendar on the Website.

We monitor weather reports and receive information from a weather service, weather channels, the bus company and Highway Superintendents to help keep us informed about possible inclement weather moving into our region and the safety of the roads. Safety is our number one priority and we collect and review as much data as possible before making decisions to close school. If it looks like the weather might improve later in the day, we will often call a two-hour delay. The reason we call a two-hour delay is to allow the state, towns and our own custodial staff time to work on plowing and removing snow; sanding and salting the roads; and cleaning parking lots and sidewalks. When we are on a two-hour delay, the bus will arrive two-hours later than it does on a regular school day. When we have a two-hour delay, we don't have the breakfast program as lunch will start within the hour, our schools run an academic modified schedule during the day and we will dismiss at the end of the day the same time as usual.

One thing I have learned over the years is that sometimes the weather is unpredictable and on rare occasions we need to close school early. We try and avoid this whenever possible because of the logistical problems it causes many families, but it is also extremely important that we get students home safely from school. This is why it is so important to have your alternative placements for your children. We want to have the best laid plans for safety and the well-being of our students. We also might cancel after school activities on a day when we have a regular day of school due to inclement weather. We may also cancel weekend events and will notify the coaches or advisors of the activity that all activities are cancelled at school that day. If there is a concert or play, we would make a district wide call letting the school community knows the activity is cancelled.

There is a process when closing school as I have outlined above. We have early morning routes being picked up and we need ample time to connect with the drivers to give direction. We have taken great strides in promoting safety at Tri-Valley and we take that responsibility very seriously.

If you ever feel it is unsafe for your child to come to school, you have the right to keep your child home.