



Sequim School District No. 323

“Inspire and Achieve”

503 North Sequim Avenue, Sequim, WA 98382

Telephone: (360) 582-3260, FAX: (360) 683-6303, www.sequim.k12.wa.us

IMPORTANT—PLEASE SAVE!

RE: Inclement Weather / School Closure Information for 2016-2017 School Year

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

The early morning frost on the windshield indicates that our fall is drawing to a close. With cooler weather approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to provide our families with information concerning our inclement weather decisions. **Our first and most important priority is to insure the safety of all our students.** While the decision to open, close, or delay the school start time can be complicated due to changing and unpredictable weather occurrences, it is our goal to inform our families as soon as possible using a variety of communication avenues. Our decision options will be kept to a minimum to assist with communication. With this as a goal, we will exercise one of the following options depending on weather conditions:

1. Schools will **OPEN AT REGULAR TIMES**. Buses will either operate on regular routes at regular times, or on pre-determined snow routes. **If buses operate on snow routes in the morning, we will operate on snow routes in the afternoon regardless of changing weather conditions. There will be NO ‘OTE’ on snow route days.**
2. Schools will open on a **2-HOUR DELAYED START**. Schools open two hours later than regular times. This means for Helen Haller Elementary, Sequim Middle School, Olympic Peninsula Academy and Sequim High School, **2-hour delayed start time Monday through Friday would be 10:15 a.m.** For Greywolf Elementary, **2-hour delayed start time Monday through Friday would be 10:30 a.m.** Bus pick up times will be 2 hours later than the normal times and may operate on regular routes or on snow routes. **Preschool will not be offered on delayed start days.** Preschool may operate on regular routes or on snow routes. Announcements concerning evening activities, practices, etc. will be made on the day of the delay.
3. Schools will **CLOSE**. If the decision to close is necessary, all scheduled school events, practices, community events that utilize school facilities, etc. will be cancelled.

Our buses are the safest means of transportation during inclement weather. Our drivers are highly trained and all precautions are taken to insure the safety of our students. Parents on Snow Route Days **must** be there to pick up their student(s) at the drop off locations by the listed times (for those students not walking to their homes). If a parent or responsible adult of a non-walker does not meet their child at the drop off location, the student will remain on the bus and return to the bus garage with the driver.

Rarely is school cancelled as a result of our inability to safely operate our buses. However, a number of factors must be considered when making our inclement weather decision. Those factors are addressed on the back of this letter.

I would encourage each family to keep a copy of the enclosed information in an easily accessible location. Thank you in advance for your understanding and patience at those times we must make changes to our regular routine.

Sincerely,

Gary Neal, Superintendent

Inclement Weather / School Closure Information for 2016-2017 School Year

Where can I get information concerning the decision? If bad weather conditions, unusual building circumstances, or other unforeseen activities occur during the night or day, Sequim School District will list modified schedule and bus route information on the district website <http://www.sequim.k12.wa.us> by 6:15 a.m. Remember to hit the “Refresh” button on your computer frequently for the most up-to-date information. Information will also be posted on the district’s Facebook site.

In the event of a school closure or 2-hour delayed start, **the district’s automated phone system will begin calling households as early at 6 a.m.** A message will also be sent by e-mail. For this purpose, it is important that your student’s school office has up-to-date contact information.

If you are unable to access our website or local radio stations KSQM 91.5 FM and KONP 1450 AM, please telephone the District Office at (360)582-3260. You may also find information broadcasted on:

AM: KONP 1450, KOMO 1000
FM: KUOW 94.9, KPLZ 101.5, KSQM 91.5, KONP 101.7
TV: KOMO 4, KING 5, KIRO 7, Q13 FOX

What factors influence the decision?

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

- ❖ **Information on road conditions from transportation staff and from Washington State Patrol.** 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/or ice accumulated.**
- ❖ **Whether precipitation is continuing.**
- ❖ **Building conditions** (whether we have electricity and water).
- ❖ **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 and some must wait outside for the bus.
- ❖ **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? The superintendent makes the decision after consulting with the transportation and maintenance supervisors, Clallam County Highway Department, State Patrol, and neighboring school districts.

When must the decision be made?

The decision must be made prior to 6 a.m. or earlier in order to notify radio and TV stations and post the decision on our website. If the decision is delayed, some parents will have already left for work, leaving their children unsupervised.