



Safety FAQs: **Code Red** and **Code Yellow** Lockdowns

The safety of our students and employees is our number one priority. The Houston County School System has procedures which are implemented if there is a potentially unsafe situation or dangerous incident at a school or nearby. District and school administrators work closely with law enforcement during crises.

Depending on the situation, a school may go into a Code Red or Code Yellow lockdown. A Code Red means that an incident is occurring at school or very nearby; a Code Yellow means that an incident is taking place in the neighborhood or there is a less serious threat on campus. Information is provided below about emergency lockdowns.

Q. When is a **Code Red** called?

A. A Code Red is announced when an incident is occurring on campus or in the immediate vicinity that may possibly endanger the health, welfare and safety of students, employees and others. A Code Red may be initiated at the recommendation of law enforcement or may be based on a campus incident for which the police are also notified.

Q. What happens when the school goes into **Code Red**?

A. The following actions are taken for Code Red:

- An announcement is made over the public address system that the school is in a Code Red lockdown.
- If law enforcement is not already involved, an administrator will call 9-1-1.
- Administrators lock exterior doors and teachers lock classroom doors.
- Students remain in the current classroom.
- Adults bring into classroom anyone in the hallways.
- Movement in the school comes to a halt. No class changes take place until the end of the lockdown.
- Student check-outs are *not* allowed
- Windows are covered, to include classroom door windows.
- If an active intruder is in the building, the announcement will state, "Code Red, Active Intruder."
- If a Code Red, Active Intruder is announced, classroom doors are barricaded. Students and teachers also hide out of sight.

Please note: Parents are asked to NOT come to the school during a Code Red because additional traffic will impede public safety response.

Q. What happens if the school is in **Code Red** when school is opening or during dismissal?

A. The incident dictates the best action. Buses and vehicles for car riders may be directed to another location off campus. Law enforcement will advise the best procedures based on the situation. Parents will be notified as soon as possible with information and any instructions that are out of the ordinary.

Q. When is a Code Yellow called?

A. A Code Yellow is announced when an incident occurs close to a school, but does not present an immediate danger to students or staff. A Code Yellow may also be called if there is a potential threat on campus which is not serious enough to warrant a Code Red lockdown.

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Q. What happens when the school goes into Code Yellow?

A. The following actions are taken for Code Yellow:

- An announcement is made over the public address system that the school is in a Code Yellow.
- If law enforcement is not already involved, an administrator is also calling 9-1-1.
- Exterior doors are locked.
- Normal operations inside the classroom continue.
- Controlled movement within the building, based on administrator's recommendation.
- Administrators determine if student check-ins and check-outs are allowed

Q. Who decides to call a Code Red or Code Yellow?

A. A school administrator ultimately makes the decision to call a Code Red or Code Yellow. This will be based on the emergency and may be at the advice of law enforcement or central office administrators.

Q. How will the students and staff know what to do if a Code Red or Code Yellow is announced?

A. All schools practice Code Red and Code Yellow drills twice a year.

Q. Are parents notified when a school has a lockdown?

A. Yes, parents are notified if there is a Code Red or Code Yellow through our automated notification system, School Messenger. Because the principal is working to ensure the safety of students and staff during the incident, the message is typically sent out once the lockdown ends.

Q. How are parents notified?

A. Parents of the students affected will be notified through our automated notification system, School Messenger.

Before an incident is the best time for parents to [log into Infinite Campus through the parent portal](#) to check phone numbers listed for general and emergency notifications. [Click here](#) to learn more about this parent portal.

Q. Where may I obtain additional information about procedures during a lockdown?

A. For more information about the procedures, please send an email to the webmaster email account at webmaster@hcbe.net or call the central office at 478-988-6200. Your question will be forwarded to the appropriate school or department for a response. A response will be provided as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a response during a crisis or after regular business hours.

Please note: School and district officials are unable to respond to phone calls, emails or social media messages/posts in the midst of an emergency. Their focus is on keeping students and staff safe from harm. Please be patient. It takes time to ascertain the facts to be able to share accurate and timely information with stakeholders. Communication with our parents will be our first priority and all others secondary.



Safety FAQs: School Closings, Early Dismissal or Delayed Opening

When severe weather is forecast, Houston County school district officials continuously monitor the weather. Safety is our number one priority, and decisions are based on what is best for all our school families. District administrators carefully and thoughtfully make decisions about school closings or time changes. We watch the weather and gather information to make the best decision for all students and staff based on the facts known at the time.

The Houston County School System has an established process that is followed whenever inclement weather necessitates a possible school closing, early dismissal or delayed opening. Information follows to describe the steps taken in the event of severe weather.

Q. Who monitors the weather?

A. The central office leadership team monitors the weather closely. The superintendent of schools and his designees stay in close communication with the Houston Emergency Management Agency (HEMA) during times of inclement weather and follow several weather forecast models.

Q. Who makes the decision to close or remain open?

A. The superintendent of schools decides if the school schedule will change or remain the same.

Q. Where does the weather information come from?

A. A variety of forecast models are reviewed, to include the National Weather Service, High Resolution Rapid Refresh, and Global Forecasting System. District administrators attend frequent weather briefings held by HEMA, during which the Georgia Emergency Management Agency provides a briefing and advice.

Once the weather impacts the area, the superintendent continues to gather information in many ways to decide when it is safe to return to schools. In addition to weather forecasts, this includes: driving the roads; checking school campuses; obtaining reports from the district's maintenance and transportation departments; and talking with community partners such as law enforcement, HEMA, county public works, Robins Air Force Base and other central Georgia school districts.

Q. What factors are considered?

A. Safety is always the first and foremost consideration for our approximately 30,000 students and 5,000 employees. Houston County is a large geographic area covering 380 square miles, and the entire county is considered since dangerous conditions that are not apparent in some areas may exist in others.

Specifically, the following factors are considered:

- weather forecast for snow, ice, hurricane, flooding, etc.
- temperature and wind chill
- predicted road conditions
- time of day weather will impact the community
- Georgia governor's State of Emergency list of counties impacted by the weather

After the weather hits, these factors also come into play when determining if it is safe to reopen:

- safe use of roads to include possibility of downed power lines or ice
- availability of electricity and water
- facility conditions of roofs, driveways, parking lot, sidewalks, etc.

Q. When is the decision made to close or remain open?

A. The timing of the decision will vary based on the circumstances, changing weather forecasts and lead time allowed by Mother Nature for the weather prediction. The decision is typically made no later than 5:00 a.m.

Q. How are families and other community members notified?

A. If there is any change to routine school operations, our families and employees will be notified through our automated notification system, School Messenger. Announcements will be posted to our website, www.hcbe.net, district [Facebook](#) and district [Twitter](#) accounts and shared with the local media outlets.

Before severe weather strikes, please [log into Infinite Campus through the parent portal](#) to check your phone numbers listed for general and emergency notifications. [Click here](#) to learn more about this parent portal. Please follow our social media accounts and bookmark our school district website — www.hcbe.net — to keep informed.

Please note: If our families do not get a call, or there is no special message posted on the website and social media that school is closed, then the district is open as usual!

Q. What if school is dismissed early?

A. If school is dismissed early, our students will be sent home in the usual manner, whether by bus, car rider, walker, etc. It is impossible for the school or district staff to accept phoned directions during emergency closures. Parents are asked to plan in advance in the event there is an early dismissal. Please ensure that children know what to do in case of an emergency. If school is dismissed early, the same communication methods listed above for school closures will be implemented.

Q. What happens if the school opening time is delayed?

A. If the school start time is delayed due to safety conditions, the same routine as usual would be followed, but at the revised time. If the opening of school is delayed, the same communication methods listed above for school closures will be implemented.

Q. Where may I obtain additional information?

A. For more information, send an email to the webmaster email account at webmaster@hcbe.net or call the central office at 478-988-6200. Your question will be forwarded to the appropriate department for a response.

Please note: The district will be unable to respond to phone calls, emails or social media messages/posts during inclement weather events.