

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. Stephen Tracy
Interim Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

Occasionally there are inquiries about procedures for closing schools due to inclement weather.

1. How is the decision made to delay, dismiss early or close schools?

Decisions regarding school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals are made by the Superintendent in consultation with the local police and highway departments, the school bus company, and area weather forecasters. The first consideration in making these decisions is student safety.

Road conditions are obviously a critical factor when making the decision and it is a difficult determination even when considering experienced car and bus drivers. **For high school drivers, please use your judgment as parents about whether your son/daughter should drive in inclement weather. If there is any doubt, please have them take the bus.**

2. How do I find out if schools are closed or delayed?

A variety of communication tools are used to announce any change to the district's regular schedule. The [School Delays and Closings page](#) of the district website provides a complete listing and information to register where necessary. These tools include:

New Milford Public Schools website: Notification of school delays, closings and early dismissal are posted on the district's homepage at www.newmilfordps.org. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for email notification through www.ctweather.com by selecting "e-Notifications." There is a link to this site on the school district's website.

Text message and Twitter alerts: Text message and twitter announcements go out as soon as a decision is made to delay or close school or in the event of early dismissal. **Telephone notification follows later, around 6:00 a.m.**

TV: Channel 3 (WFSB) Channel 6/NBC 30 (WVIT) Channel 8 (WTNH) FOX61 (WTIC)

Sometimes there are technical difficulties with websites, email or the media. If in doubt, please check multiple sources.

3. How are delayed openings handled?

Morning decisions about **delayed openings** are usually made between 4:45 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. based on road conditions and weather forecasts available at that hour. Decisions must be made at that point because the first school buses begin their morning runs shortly after 6:00 a.m.

This year, depending on the weather forecast, we will use either a TWO HOUR or a THREE HOUR delayed opening. The notification will clearly state which schedule will be used.

School Start Times with a TWO HOUR Delayed Opening:

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School	9:35 a.m.
Sarah Noble Intermediate, Northville and Hill & Plain Elementary Schools	10:50 a.m.

School Start Times with a THREE HOUR Delayed Opening:

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School	10:35 a.m.
Sarah Noble Intermediate, Northville and Hill & Plain Elementary Schools	11:50 a.m.

Morning EXCEL classes are canceled when there is any delayed opening.

If the weather does not improve during the delay period, a decision to close school for the day may be made. Parents and guardians should check the district website and TV stations listed above until the delay period has passed in order to make sure that school will be in session. A text message and twitter alert update will also be sent.

4. How am I notified in the event of an early dismissal?

The district will use all the tools referenced above. In addition, parents will be notified using the **School Messenger system**. The district will use this **automated calling system to notify parents in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal**. This service allows us to send a voice mail message to all parents within minutes.

Decisions about **early dismissal** due to weather problems are usually made during the morning and announced between **9:45 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.** During weather related early dismissals, students are dismissed two hours and 15 minutes early. **Afternoon EXCEL Pre-K classes are canceled when early dismissal occurs.**

School Dismissal Times with an Early Dismissal:

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School	12:00 p.m.
Sarah Noble Intermediate, Northville and Hill & Plain Elementary Schools	1:00 p.m.

Morning EXCEL students go home at their usual time of 11:15 a.m.

An **Accelerated Early Dismissal** may be called when a storm happens unexpectedly or is anticipated to arrive between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. If this should occur, the school messenger call will reference **“accelerated early dismissal”** as part of the message.

Accelerated Early Dismissal Times:

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School	11:00 a.m.
Sarah Noble Intermediate, Northville and Hill & Plain Elementary Schools	12:00 p.m.

On a day when an accelerated early dismissal is called, morning EXCEL students will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. with the elementary schools.

The ability to deliver a message is only as successful as the contact information that we have for your child, therefore, please make certain that your child’s school has the most up-to-date direct dial numbers. This information is updated annually at the beginning of the school year. If your information changes after the annual update, please let your child’s school know immediately.

5. What about school sponsored events (concerts, athletics, special events and afterschool activities) on days when school is dismissed early or closed?

All school sponsored events are canceled if school is closed or dismissed early.

6. **Why are schools sometimes closed when the weather doesn't seem to be too bad?**
Given the uncertainty of weather forecasts, conditions can change considerably between 5:45 a.m. and normal school opening time. Occasionally, a storm warning will cause us to close schools, but a few hours later the storm may turn in another direction. We would rather have the schools closed on such a day than to risk having the storm hit while we have thousands of children in the schools or on the roads.
7. **What if schools are open but my road is dangerous?**
New Milford is the largest town in Connecticut. It is quite possible for conditions on a few roads to be hazardous while conditions are good throughout the rest of the town. You should keep your child home if you believe that conditions on your particular street are unsafe. Inform the school by way of a phone call or an absence note that your child was absent due to hazardous road conditions. The absence will be subject to the school attendance policies as detailed in the student handbook.
8. **What can I do if I am concerned that my child might come home to an empty house in the event of an early closing?**
Parents and guardians should arrange with neighbors or friends to handle situations where young children might arrive home from school to find no one there. Please make sure your children know what to do in case you may ever be delayed. Again, you can stay informed about early closing decisions through our various communication tools: the rapid notification alerts, watching one of the TV stations listed, or by checking the district website at www.newmilfordps.org.

Changes in school hours can be difficult to handle given a family's busy schedule. However, I know you will understand that safety considerations must come first and that making decisions that affect thousands of people in a large area while facing uncertain weather forecasts can be difficult. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.

Please note below the normal school hours for the 2018 – 2019 school year.

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School:
School day begins at **7:35 a.m.** and dismisses at **2:15 p.m.**

Sarah Noble Intermediate, Northville and Hill & Plain Elementary Schools:
School day begins at **8:50 a.m.** and dismisses at **3:15 p.m.**

Best wishes to you and your child for a rewarding and productive school experience in the coming year.

Very truly yours,



Stephen Tracy
Interim Superintendent of Schools