



# ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

GEOFFREY M. HICKS, SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff:

I am writing to you this year to remind you of Arlington's early dismissal, cancellation, and delay policies and procedures. This year the district has added an automatic phone call system called **School Messenger**. The system allows us to broadcast messages quickly in order to keep you informed of emergency situations, school activities, important dates and special events. We plan on using *School Messenger* to notify parents of all emergency closings, cancellations, or early dismissals. Additional information on *School Messenger* is provided near the end of this correspondence.

## Early Dismissal Times

In the event that severe inclement weather is anticipated during the school day but **before** the normal school dismissal time, students will be released as follows:

- **Arlington High School**      **10:00 a.m.**
- **Middle Schools**            **10:00 a.m.**
- **Elementary Schools**        **11:30 a.m.**

These are our traditional bus departure times for an emergency early dismissal. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances that severely threaten students' well-being, we will not conduct an early dismissal later in the day. Although this increases the possibility of dismissing students on the basis of weather forecasts that do not materialize, we believe that this will be safer for students and less confusing for parents.

## Kindergarten Early Dismissal

As in the past, all Kindergarten families must be aware that on early dismissal days, Kindergarten students **cannot** be dropped off at their homes. They will be traveling on buses with all of the other elementary students in their school and will be dropped off at regular school bus stops.

## Emergency Drop off Locations

School principals and secretaries have reported that many of our students do not know where they should go when school is dismissed early. This situation is further complicated when student emergency cards are incomplete or when students have multiple drop off locations throughout the week. Both of these conditions dramatically increase the likelihood of confusion on the part of students, teachers, parents, bus drivers and others. In order to safeguard each child, **please confirm with your school a single emergency drop off location** in the event of an early dismissal. Please discuss this plan with your children. When confusion occurs, it is not always possible to reach parents to confirm their child's destination. We need your help to ensure that every Arlington student is **transported safely** to the correct location. Please remember that the school does not call parents to alert them of an early dismissal. The sources for early dismissal information are listed at the end of this letter.

### Cancellation Procedures

Incident weather assessment begins at approximately 4:00 a.m. when members of the Transportation and Maintenance staff tour various areas of the school district. They also make contact with other agencies to determine the current condition of roads, parking lots, highways, and walkways. As you might imagine, given the very large geographic area of the school district (over 110 square miles), some areas of the school district may often receive more severe weather than others. Between 4:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., I consult with our Transportation and Maintenance departments, weather forecast services, and other school districts to make the best decision possible about delays and cancellations. Decisions on closing or delaying school will be made, if possible, by 5:30 a.m. in order to provide ample time for bus drivers and staff, many of whom travel significant distances to Arlington.

### Delayed Openings

If it appears that road conditions will improve, a delay of school for a two-hour period will be announced. During a two-hour delay, high school students will start their school day at 9:30 a.m. instead of 7:30 a.m. All other schools will similarly start two hours later than normal. A two-hour delay **CANCELS ALL A.M. KINDERGARTEN** sessions. If after announcing a two-hour delay we determine that safety conditions will not be improved, we will announce school closure by approximately 7:00 a.m.

### Cancellation Information

There are a variety of sources of information for school delays, closings, and early dismissals:

<b>School Messenger Phone Broadcast System</b>	<p>This system is designed to call phone systems, utilize email addresses and send text messages depending upon the information available in the student data system. The system has the ability to call all possible phone numbers for a student or family simultaneously for a minimum of three attempts. If an answering machine responds, a message will be left.</p> <p>The voice message is activated when the person answering the phone says "Hello". There is a slight pause while the message begins.</p> <p>Please note that more details about the system will be sent home in a separate correspondence</p>
<b>Websites</b>	<p><a href="http://www.arlingtonschools.org">www.arlingtonschools.org</a> <a href="http://www.cancellations.com">www.cancellations.com</a></p>
<b>Local Radio Stations</b>	<p>WPDH 101.5 FM                      WHUD 100.7 FM WSPK 104.7 FM                      WBNR 1260 AM WRWD 107.3 FM</p>
<b>Television</b>	<p>WRNNTV                                  WABC-TV</p>

If you have any questions regarding the procedures and protocols, please contact me at 486-4460.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey M. Hicks  
Superintendent of Schools