

Shaler Area School District

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Dear Shaler Area families,

With the first snowfall of the season making its debut earlier this week, we wanted to address our inclement weather plans for this year, as well as expectations surrounding travel during the upcoming holiday seasons and the availability of help for families experiencing hardships.

Inclement Weather:

The safety of our students and staff is of utmost importance to us, so we take the decision to delay or cancel classes very seriously. During a winter weather event, we take into account the current road and weather conditions, temperature and wind chill as well as the day's forecast. We also consult with the safety coordinators of our contracted bus companies who travel the roads in the district to assess their safety. Please be aware, school delays or cancellations also can occur for other unexpected reasons, such as an area water main break, power outage, or other significant event. Be sure that you have appropriate plans in place in the event the district should need to delay, cancel, or dismiss students early.

For this school year, we will use the following process:

- In the event of inclement weather, a two-hour delay schedule may be used on in-person instruction days. If it is necessary to cancel in-person classes, all students will participate in virtual instruction on that day.
- The decision to delay or cancel school will be made whenever possible before 6 a.m. and if possible, the night before. However, there are occasions that changing road and weather conditions will necessitate a later decision.
- Families should check the district's website, www.sasd.k12.pa.us, for important information such as delays and closings. Additionally, the district's phone message (412-492-1200) will be updated to reflect any changes in the district's schedule as well as the district's social media accounts.
- Families also can choose to receive texts and/or emails through the district website by signing up for the "Email Newsletter" on the main webpage, adding a cell phone number and/or email address and choosing "school closings."
- In addition to the main phone number and website, Shaler Area notifies three local news stations: KDKA, WPXI, WTAE. Please note that the school district does not control how quickly the information is updated on-air. You may consider signing up for the e-mail alerts through the respective television stations.

Holiday Travel:

With the holiday season approaching, we know that many families are considering travel as part of their holiday plans. If you do choose to travel, please note that the state Department of Health regularly updates a [list of states](#) where there are high COVID-19 case counts. If you plan to travel to a state identified in this list, please contact [your school nurse](#). Your student will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon their return. During this time, your student will participate in school via the 100% virtual instruction model.

Support:

Finally, we want to remind you that we are here to support your child and family. If you have concerns regarding your student or if they are experiencing any difficulty in the hybrid learning environment, please contact your student's classroom teacher, school principal, or school counselor. Additionally, if your family is struggling as a result of the pandemic, please reach out to your school social worker. We also encourage each family to apply for the free or reduced-price meal program. While breakfast and lunch will remain free for every student through the remainder of the school year, qualifying for the free or reduced-price meal program also qualifies students to receive other discounted or free services such as testing fee waivers. Enrollment in the program also qualifies the district to receive Title 1 funding for academic programs and federal funding for telecommunication/technology services.

The online application for the free or reduced-price meal program is located at www.compass.state.pa.us. If you need a paper application or help filling out the application, please contact Sue McElhinny at mcelhinnys@sasd.k12.pa.us or your school's social worker. A list of our school social workers is available at: <https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/PupilPersonnelServices.aspx>.

Thank you again for your support as we work together to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Aiken
Superintendent of Schools

Bryan E. O'Black, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent