

School Closures



Severe weather conditions or other emergencies can cause a change in school schedules or cancellation of the school day. Although rare, changes and closures do happen. The decision to close schools or alter the schedule is not taken lightly. The district will make every effort to get the information out to the community via local media, internet and e-mail if a closure or delayed start should occur.

Who decides to delay or close schools due to inclement weather?

The district's transportation director determines the status of school bus operations and road conditions by driving the roads himself and collecting data from Anchorage police, city and state road maintenance personnel, as well as ASD safety officers and maintenance personnel. The information is shared with the assistant superintendent of support services who discusses the concerns with the superintendent. The superintendent makes the final decision on whether to delay school starting times or close school altogether for the day.

When is the decision made to close schools or delay the start due to weather?

The superintendent makes a final decision between 4:30 and 5 a.m. on inclement weather days. If she decides to delay or close schools, the information will immediately be posted at www.asdk12.org, sent electronically to subscribers of ASD Direct, posted on ASD-TV cable channel 14 and shared with local radio and television stations.

What factors are taken into account when deciding whether to close schools?

Safety of students and staff is the number one priority when the decision is made whether to close schools. The superintendent must also weigh the effects a potential closure may have on the community. For example,

- Many parents must find immediate childcare or stay home from work for the day. In turn, the workforce across the municipality may be drastically reduced.
- The district has a limited number of snow days available for use before it is forced to add days to the school calendar.

- A closure may affect the critical, high-stakes testing and assessment calendar set by the state.
- Many students close to graduation need credit hours and lessons completed to earn a diploma. A closure may have a negative impact on their efforts.

How many snow days are included in the school calendar?

There are 182 school days each year. The state requires 170 "student contact days" meaning school must be in session. Regulations allow for an additional 10 in-service days. The district uses in-service days for teacher professional development, grade reporting, parent conferences and classroom set-up/take-down. That leaves two days that may be used for emergency closure days. Any closure that occurs after the exhaustion of those two days will require an adjustment to the school calendar.

What about non-weather emergencies?

Each school and administrative building has developed its own disaster and crisis plan that outlines how staff would respond in an emergency situation. Parents are encouraged to ask their school's principal to review it at any time. Employees should talk to their supervisor. ASD is dedicated to providing a safe place to learn, work and visit. Emergency plan questions may be directed to each school's principal or the district's Safety & Emergency Preparedness office at 742-7800.

On inclement weather days, can parents keep their children home even if schools are open?

Parents are encouraged to use their judgment to determine what is best for their children. Parents and guardians should notify their children's school of the excused absence.

Are schools closed? If they are, you can find out here:

**ASD-TV cable
channel 14**

www.asdk12.org
notice posted in red at top
of site and in the district
headlines

742-4000
Automated phone recording

ASD-Direct
Sign up for notification
e-mail at www.asdk12.org

**Local radio and
TV stations**
Will broadcast the
information throughout
the morning