

How We Make Decisions About Inclement Weather

While many of us love wintertime in the Rocky Mountains, we all recognize the hazards that come with traveling in bad weather. Every winter, we are faced with tough decisions about whether or not to hold or to cancel school during inclement weather. We want you to know about the process we use to make these important decisions.

When there is inclement weather, the Roaring Fork Schools transportation department starts the following process at 2 a.m. to determine whether or not to hold or cancel school that day:

1. Remotely view the outside cameras on schools in multiple communities to observe the impact of inclement weather on our school sites.
2. Contact plowing operations departments at Garfield, Eagle and Pitkin Counties for status updates on the ability of plows to initially clear, as well as expectations about whether plows will be able to adequately maintain bus routes throughout the duration of the expected inclement weather.
3. Contact emergency services dispatchers at Garfield, Eagle and Pitkin Counties to understand current emergency status.
4. Contact Roaring Fork Schools maintenance personnel to receive status updates about school plowing and road conditions.
5. Drive the roads to experience the conditions firsthand.
6. Contact school administration to consult and recommend action. The Roaring Fork Schools will come to a decision regarding school closures by 5:30 a.m. and notifications to staff and parents will begin afterwards. (In some cases, if a storm is imminent, school may be cancelled the night before.)
7. In rare cases, individual mountain bus routes may be cancelled. In this situation, absences will be excused.

Inclement weather decisions will be shared in the following ways by 6am:

- Snow Hotline: Parents can call 384-6075 to hear a recorded message (available in both in English and Spanish) about whether school will be held or cancelled that day.
- Website: A notice will also be posted on the [district website](#) in the district alerts box in the top-right corner of the site.
- Email: We will send out a district-wide email to parents.
- Facebook: We will also post on Facebook on <https://www.facebook.com/RoaringForkSchoolDistrict> page.
- Local media outlets.

Of course, weather forecasting and road condition reporting are not an exact science. The process outlined above provides a safe and consistent way to assess conditions at a given point in time. Any decision to cancel school is based on student safety. If we decide to hold school, it is because we have determined it is safe to do so. Our buses are equipped with chains, and our bus drivers are experienced in driving during inclement weather and capable of providing safe transportation on snowy or slick roads in most circumstances.

We also want to emphasize that parents have the right to keep students home from school, take them to school, or provide transportation to school later when the roads are less of a concern if they feel the road conditions are unsafe.

Our priority is that students and staff arrive safely to school and work. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns about our inclement weather decision-making process.

FAQs

1) Why doesn't the school district implement a delayed start during inclement weather?

There are a critical number of bus drivers who have other jobs. Because these drivers are still required to report at a specific time for their other jobs, they do not have the flexibility to drive during a delayed start. Without these drivers, the transportation department would not be able to provide the necessary resources to transport students who rely on busing.

2) The weather was really bad in Basalt, but seemed fine in Carbondale and Glenwood Springs. Why doesn't the school district cancel school in Basalt only?

Cancelling school in a single community would be problematic because so many staff and students commute between and through all communities.

3) School is still open, but I don't feel safe getting my student to school. What should I do?

Parents have the right to keep students home from school, take them to school, or provide transportation to school later when the roads are less of a concern if they feel the road conditions are unsafe. Tardies or absences due to inclement weather will be excused.