

Emergency Closure/Delayed Start FAQs

Iron County on average receives 71 inches of snow annually between the months of October and April. Generally speaking, the county is prepared for winter weather. Occasionally the area is hit by a sizable storm and to some, particularly those from other areas of the country, keeping schools open may seem peculiar.

However, the Iron County School District recognizes that schools are a public service. Many rely on schools remaining open and serving as a safe haven for children. The district recognizes that many students may be left home without adult supervision as some parents do not have the luxury of choosing to stay home. Closures, due to snow, are rare.

With that in mind, here are some frequently asked questions and answers regarding emergency closures and delayed starts in the Iron County School District.

What determines an emergency closure?

Storm warnings from the National Weather Service are monitored closely. District snowplows are dispatched as early as 3 a.m. to begin plowing school parking lots. County and city officials are also consulted regarding weather conditions throughout the district.

Using that information, the Superintendent determines whether there will be an emergency school closure. This decision is made by 6 a.m. In the event of an emergency closure, parents and guardians are notified via a text and call-out to phone numbers on record in PowerSchool. Notification is also posted on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and school and district websites as well as the ICSD App.

An emergency closure of schools may be called as a result of other situations. Those will be considered on a case-by-case basis and communicated to parents in the same manner.

I can't get out of my driveway. Why aren't you closing schools?

Iron County School District covers 3,301 square miles. Conditions vary throughout the county. For example, New Harmony may be buried in snow while Cedar City only received a light amount. Some city streets are also cleared earlier than others.

Ultimately parents can make the call when it comes to their child's safety. If you do not think it is safe to transport or send your student to school, please keep them home. Administrators and teachers will take the inclement weather into consideration when

working with tardies and absences. Students are advised to meet with their teachers when they return to complete any missing assignments.

Will the bus be delayed?

Buses, like private vehicles, are victims of slow traffic during inclement weather. If traffic is delayed, buses will be delayed. Students who ride the bus, should dress for the inclement weather to make the longer wait more comfortable. Administrators and teachers will be understanding of tardies due to late buses.

If a delayed start is called by the district, buses will also be on a two-hour delay.

Why do we have to make up days lost due to inclement weather?

State law requires schools to make up emergency closures. The school year calendar is created in advance so parents know start dates, end dates, breaks and other days off from school. In the rare situation where an emergency closure takes place, the day will be made up by shortening one of the future breaks, such as Spring Break. The district will notify parents of what day will be used for the make up day.

Why does the district call a delayed start instead of an emergency closure?

A delayed start is an option that gives time for roads to be cleared and conditions to improve. A delayed-start day counts as a regular school day and does NOT need to be made up in the calendar. All end times will remain the same as usual. For example, on a delayed-start day, East Elementary, which normally starts school at 8:55 a.m. would start school at 10:55 a.m. but they would still get out at 3:30 p.m. as usual.

On a delayed-start schedule, morning kindergarten and morning preschool will be canceled. Kindergarten and preschool class cancellations will not be made up or rescheduled.

It's been snowing all day. Shouldn't you send students home early?

Schools are a safe, warm haven. The district recognizes that sending students home early may mean children are going to an empty home. Schools will remain open on days they are scheduled to be in operation. Parents may be asked to pick up students early if there is a health or safety concern — such as a significant power outage resulting in the temperature in the school dropping below department of health requirements. But the district will typically not close school early.

The news indicates it will snow all night. Why don't you announce a weather closure the night before so I can prepare for it?

Unfortunately, the weather is unpredictable. Many forecasted storms have not lived up to the hype. The decision to close schools is typically made in the morning to avoid any unnecessary makeup days. If a decision is made the night before, parents will be notified via a text and call-out to phone numbers on record in PowerSchool. Notification is also posted on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and school and district websites as well as the ICSD App.

The parking lot is a mess. Doesn't the district have a snowplow?

Iron County School District uses 12 trucks to plow 23 district facilities, which includes schools. During a normal snow event, it takes 2-3 hours to plow a high school parking lot. Plows may start out as early as midnight. If there are cars in the parking lot, effective snow removal is limited. If the snowstorm is active, schools plowed first may see additional accumulation and appear to have been missed by the plow crew. Secondary schools, which start earlier, are typically plowed first.

The district called for a delayed start. Does this mean the cancellation of any programs or classes?

Yes, morning sessions of kindergarten and preschool are canceled in the event of a delayed start. Additionally, all before-school programs and field trips scheduled to begin prior to the delayed-start time are canceled. Please contact individual schools for other possible cancellations.

Where can I find out if schools are closed?

In the event of an emergency closure or delayed start, information will be posted to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and on each school's website and the ICSD app. The district also utilizes a call-out system to call guardian phone numbers listed on PowerSchool. Text messages will also be sent out.

Where can I find the bell schedule for a two-hour delayed start?

High schools and middle schools will post the bell schedule on their website. Please check your student's school webpage for details.

Does a district closure impact other entities?

Iron County School District can only close district schools. If you have students who attend a charter school or who take classes at Southern Utah University or Southwest Technical College, you will need to check with that entity regarding closures.