

### **If buses can run with chains, why don't we have school on marginal days?**

We rely heavily on weather reports. At times, there is the possibility of the weather worsening and having to turn the buses around before getting to school in order to get students home safely. Everyone's safety is top priority.

### **Why do we sometimes delay the opening of school?**

Delays allow DOT to salt and scrape roads, to provide decision-making time as conditions change, or to get information about roads in specific areas.

### **How will I be notified if school is dismissed early due to inclement weather?**

A Connect5 message will be sent to all contact numbers for each individual student. Early release information will also be communicated through local radio stations and the Ashe County Schools' webpage.

### **Many times my street is fine, yet schools close. Why not open some schools?**

We operate on a county-wide calendar. Since we make up all days missed, we avoid having different schools on different calendars for the remainder of the year. Also, Ashe High School and Ashe Middle School serve the entire county, so conditions always affect those students.

### **What are limited bus routes?**

Many days, the primary roads are clear and dry, yet secondary roads are suspect. With limited routes, we open schools and run buses on clear roads only. Parents in remote areas may either drive their students to catch a bus on the limited route or drive them to school.

### **If buses run limited routes in the morning, will buses run limited routes in the afternoon?**

Yes. Our bus drivers must use extreme caution while traveling and we instruct them not to travel roads they could not travel that morning. Also, many of the bus turnarounds become a problem and there is greater potential of our buses getting stuck.

### **Why not make decisions the night before so families have more time to make arrangements?**

For many reasons, we try to announce school closings the day before; however, conditions often change drastically overnight. Therefore, we cannot make the best decision unless we go out early in the morning to check current road conditions.

### **Does winter weather deprive our students of important school time?**

No. The days missed due to inclement weather are made up as the school calendar will permit. State law requires that all students attend school a minimum of 185 days or 1,025 instructional hours.

### **Where can I get the best information about school closings? (listed in priority order)**

- 1. Ashe County Schools' website**  
[www.asheschools.org](http://www.asheschools.org)
- 2. Local radio stations**
- 3. Regional television stations**
- 4. SnowLine—336.877.9575—only available when the decision is not made the previous day**
- 5. Connect5—Notification Service**



# **ASHE COUNTY SCHOOLS GUIDE TO SCHOOL CLOSINGS**



*Challenging young minds to soar.*

**336.246.7175**  
**[www.asheschools.org](http://www.asheschools.org)**

**SnowLine**  
**336.877.9575**

## GUIDE TO SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Ashe County School Board plans to have school on a regular schedule every day that the roads are judged to be safe for bus travel. During hazardous weather conditions, the Superintendent will determine whether school will be delayed, cancelled or dismissed early.

Winter weather requires school administrators to make very difficult decisions involving delays, school closings and limited bus routes. We have prepared the following information to help students and parents understand these decisions for dealing with winter weather in the High Country.

### CONNECT5 SERVICE

Keeping everyone informed is a top priority for Ashe County Schools. Therefore, we will continue to use a messaging system—Connect5—which will allow us to send a telephone call to you providing important information about school events or emergencies. We will use Connect5 to notify employees, students and parents of school delays and cancellations due to inclement weather.

The successful delivery of information is dependent upon accurate contact information for each student, so please make certain that we have your most current phone number. If this information changes during the year, please contact your child's school with updated information.

### STUDENT DRIVERS

Ashe County Schools provides the opportunity for all students to utilize bus transportation to and from home and school. A parent or other legal guardian may grant permission for his/her student to drive a motor vehicle to and from home and school and/or to be a passenger in a motor vehicle operated by another student. Parents are encouraged not to allow students to drive to school on inclement weather days. The weather can bring about extremely hazardous driving conditions when there is a delayed school opening and even when school starts on time. The Ashe County Board of Education is not responsible for personal injury or property damage resulting from student operation of a privately owned motor vehicle.

## Most Frequently Asked Questions About Connect5

### How many times will Connect5 try to call me?

The Connect5 system will make up to three attempts to reach each number.

### How can I retrieve a message from Connect5?

To replay a missed or interrupted call, please dial **1-855-4-REPLAY**. You must use the same phone that received the initial call from Connect5.

### How does Connect5 work with my answering machine or voicemail?

Connect5 starts the broadcast immediately upon telephone pickup and listens simultaneously for any interruptions. If the system is not interrupted by noise or someone speaking within the first 3-5 seconds, the message is delivered. If the system detects a greeting longer than a few seconds, the system treats this as an outgoing message from an answering machine and will stop playing, wait for silence (usually after the beep) and then start the message over so that it can be recorded in its entirety.

### Opt-Out/In Hotline

**855-502-STOP (855-502-7867)**

Recipients can call the Blackboard Opt-out/in Hotline anytime to opt-out of informational **calls or to opt-back into calls**. The hotline is available in both English and Spanish. If you have accidentally opted out of receiving calls, use the main telephone number associated with your child's PowerSchool account to call the above number and follow the prompts to opt back in to receiving informational calls.

## Most Frequently Asked Questions About School Delays and Closings

### Who actually makes the decision?

The Superintendent determines if school is delayed or closed with assistance from the Inclement Weather Team which consists of sixteen staff members, the Ashe County Department of Transportation (DOT), the Ashe County Sheriff's Department and other local agencies.

### What is the process of deciding to close schools?

Information is acquired from the Sheriff's Department and DOT and by 4:00 am, school staff members begin road checks throughout the county. Every effort is made to arrive at a decision by 6:00 am in order to notify the public.

### When can we expect a decision?

A decision will be made by 6:00 am at the latest, unless conditions are changing rapidly, requiring delays or changes in status.

### How will I know if school is delayed or closed?

All employees, students and parents will receive a Connect5 message by 6:00 am if school is delayed or closed. All delays and closings will be announced on local radio and regional television stations as well as our webpage and the SnowLine.