

Weather Emergencies & Virtual Learning Days

Dear Families,

During inclement weather that would cause a school closing or delay of schedule, York Catholic will call/text/email you through our One Call Now Emergency Notification system. Other modes of notification include WGAL TV-8, Fox43, and the YC website. Students from individual school districts are automatically excused if their district closes and does not provide transportation to YC. The exceptions to this are Southern and Southeastern. These students follow York Catholic's delay and closing schedule.

When conditions merit that we close school, we typically operate a Virtual Learning Day (VLD).

Here's how this works:

- Students will be assigned work in each class through Google Classroom to be completed using their school-issued devices or home device. Students will have the option of completing these assignments when classes resume if there are issues with completing the work at home due to Internet access or other extenuating factors. Students will not be penalized for failure to complete work if sufficient evidence has been provided regarding a lack of access or other extenuating factors. If there are extenuating circumstances, parents should communicate those to attendance@yorkcatholic.org. Students will still be expected to make up the assignments within 2 school days.
- The Virtual Learning Day will count as a "Cycle Day." When school resumes, students will return to the next scheduled cycle day that follows the VLD cycle day.
- Your child's teacher(s) will be available for assistance, via email, from 9AM-3PM during the VLD.
- Students should submit assignments virtually. Submitting assignments the following day by the start of class is acceptable as well, either electronically or via submission of paper/pencil work.

Using a Virtual Learning Day will enable us to continue student engagement while the students are at home. These days will count as school days as well.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hand
Principal

Weather-Related Closings, Delays, and Early Dismissals Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary consideration when school is delayed or closed due to weather?

York Catholic and all public school districts consider student safety as the single most important factor in the decision to delay or close school. York Catholic students live in every school district within York County and many live in northern Maryland. The bus transportation availability of each school district is also a major factor in our decision making.

What factors are used to consider student safety?

- Building safety: We must ensure that the building is safe and has the power to provide heat and light. The building is also assessed for damage, such as downed trees, water damage, etc. Parking lots, driveways, and walkways must also be safe.
- Travel safety: Is it safe for buses to navigate their routes? Is it safe for students to wait at bus stops? Is it safe for staff and students to drive or walk to and from school?

Who makes the decision to delay or close school?

York Catholic's Principal is responsible for making this decision. Before making the decision, the Principal consults with the public schools regarding bus transportation, the Director of Operations for an assessment of conditions in and around the YC campus, and bus companies for an assessment of road conditions on the bus routes. Sometimes additional consultation with area meteorologists, township police, and township managers takes place. When considering canceling school for the day, those consultations must take place as early as possible so timely notification may be made to the transportation company.

How is the decision made to dismiss school early?

If York Catholic needs to dismiss earlier than 3 PM, a dismissal time is determined based on the projected arrival times of school district buses. On rare occasions, York Catholic may dismiss earlier than the published time for safety purposes.

How is the decision to delay or close school communicated to families?

If the students are at home, families are notified through York Catholic's One Call Now emergency notification system. The decision is also posted on the YC website at www.yorkcatholic.org and its Facebook, Instagram, and X accounts. WGAL-TV 8 and Fox 43 are also notified of the decision. Please note that on the weekends and on non-weather-related days, WGAL and Fox may not be broadcasting their closings and delays announcements.

If the students are in school and a decision is made to send them home early, the One Call Now emergency notification system is used to inform parents and guardians so they can be prepared to receive students at bus stops. Early dismissals are also posted on the YC website, Facebook, Instagram and X accounts, and on WGAL, and Fox 43.

Why are schools sometimes closed before the weather is actually bad?

Student safety is the primary concern. When bad weather is anticipated, multiple sources are consulted. The school must have confidence that the conditions are safe for bus travel for a full two-hour window to transport students to school and a full two-hour window to transport students home from school. At times, public school districts must rely on forecasts alone. In that case, multiple sources are consulted, and occasionally, they are not accurate.

When is the decision made to close schools?

Public school districts use the following process in partnership with York Catholic and one another:

- If students are in school and the weather turns bad, consideration must be given to the best time to release them. Will conditions get better or worse as the day progresses? Notice must be given to the bus company to get drivers to the bus depot and time allotted for the buses to get to the schools for pick up. Parents/guardians must be notified.
- If the students are at home, the decision is made as soon as possible so families can make the necessary arrangements for transportation or care. When possible, a decision is made the evening before the delay or closing. If enough information is known to warrant a delay or closing prior to 9 p.m. the night before, a decision will be announced. Often it is anticipated that conditions will change by morning and the decision is delayed until morning. Decisions are typically determined between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m., and announced by 6:30 a.m.

What is the most difficult call to make?

The most difficult call to make is when there is a forecast of a significant weather condition to begin between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. Such decisions may have to be based on the forecast alone, which can be inaccurate.

Why are some schools around the county closed and York Catholic is not?

Every school district has its unique geographic considerations. Many districts (Eastern, South Eastern, South Western, Red Lion, and Dallastown) have more rural bus routes and are more likely to delay or close because it is difficult to maintain the more rural roads than the suburban roads in the districts of Central, West York, and York Suburban.

Will the date of graduation be moved?

It is unlikely that the graduation date will be moved. The Board and Administration recognize that this event is very special, the culmination of many years of hard work. Families plan well in advance for the special event, and YC makes every attempt to honor the designated date. However, extenuating circumstances involving an inordinate number of inclement weather closures throughout the school year may require the moving of graduation.