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January 23, 2026

## **Important Notice**

### Winter Storm - School Closure Notification

Dear RCPS Families,

Based on National Weather Service forecasts and in coordination with local emergency management officials, we are proactively addressing the major winter storm expected to impact Rappahannock County this weekend and into next week. Because of the uncertainty of communications during storm conditions, and the potential for limited power and connectivity, we are providing information early to help you best prepare.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

**RCPS will be CLOSED Monday, January 26 and Tuesday, January 27** due to anticipated hazardous road conditions and widespread power outages from the winter storm.

Families should prepare for the possibility of school closures through Friday, January 30. The National Weather Service is forecasting 8-12+ inches of snow, significant ice accumulation, and sustained below-freezing temperatures throughout next week. These conditions mean road conditions may remain dangerous well beyond the storm itself, and power restoration could take several days.

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE STORM

The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Warning for our area from Saturday afternoon through Monday afternoon. Here's what forecasters expect:

- Saturday evening: Heavy snow begins
- Sunday: Continued heavy snow then a transition to sleet and freezing rain
- Power outages: Widespread and potentially long-lasting due to ice weight on power lines and trees
- Temperatures: Remaining below freezing through Wednesday morning
- Travel: Dangerous to impossible from Saturday evening through Monday; Monday morning commute is NOT advised

Governor Spanberger has declared a state of emergency for Virginia in preparation for this storm.

## ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

Teachers may send optional materials home with students on Friday to help maintain academic momentum during this period. Most will be enrichment and practice activities, not required work, designed to keep learning

fresh during an extended break. No student will be penalized for work not completed during storm-related closures.

## COMMUNICATION & UPDATES

We will make daily decisions about school operations based on:

- Road conditions and VDOT assessments
- Power restoration status
- Building temperatures and safety
- Input from emergency management officials

Updates will be sent by 6:00 PM each evening via our Alert System and posted on our social media platforms and our website ([www.rappahannockschools.us](http://www.rappahannockschools.us)) regarding the following day's status.

## EMERGENCY RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Rave Alert allows Rappahannock County government to connect important weather alerts and emergency notifications to our residents, businesses and visitors. Simply click [HERE](#) to sign up today and receive emergency alerts.

This dynamic, multi-function notification system allows the Office of Emergency Management and Rappahannock County 911 to notify residents of emergency situations or disasters in our community.

Using the Smart911™ profile you create, Rave Alert allows you to register for those notifications most pertinent to you, from road closures and vehicle crashes to hazardous material spills and missing persons. You will receive focused messaging geared specifically to your information and safety needs.

Your Smart911™ web-based profile does more than give emergency notifications. You have the option to provide critical information to help emergency responders, such as medical history, function or access needs, identification of children and pets – thereby providing first responders with immediate and critical life-saving information.

During a disaster, Smart911™ can be called upon by Emergency Management officials to locate members of our community most in need. Citizens requiring oxygen or insulin, for example, can be identified and assisted during major emergencies if they choose to provide that information.

Using the link provided [HERE](#), you can learn more about these free services. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact County Emergency Management at [ESC@rappahannockcountyva.gov](mailto:ESC@rappahannockcountyva.gov).

### Emergency Services:

- Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) Outage Reporting: 1-800-552-3904 or online at [myrec.coop](http://myrec.coop)
- Virginia 211: Dial 211 for information on warming centers, food assistance, and emergency shelters
- Non-emergency Sheriff's line: 540-675-5300

### Food Assistance:

If your family needs food assistance during this extended closure, please contact:

- Rappahannock Food Pantry: 540-987-5090 / <https://www.rappahannockpantry.org/>

## STORM PREPARATION GUIDANCE

We strongly encourage all families to prepare now:

### Essential Supplies:

- Stock non-perishable food and water (plan for 3-7 days)
- Charge all devices and have battery backups ready
- Ensure adequate heating fuel; check generator function and have fuel on hand
- Have flashlights, extra batteries, and battery-powered radio available
- Fill prescriptions and gather necessary medications
- Have a plan for keeping infants warm if power is lost

### Home Safety:

- Bring pets indoors
- Know the location of your main water shut-off in case pipes freeze
- Clear gutters and ensure drains are functioning
- Have sand, salt, or kitty litter for traction on walkways
- Protect outdoor faucets and exposed pipes

### Vehicle Preparation:

- Fill gas tanks
- Check antifreeze levels
- Have ice scrapers, blankets, and emergency supplies in vehicles
- Avoid unnecessary travel from Saturday evening through Monday

## SAFETY REMINDERS

- Stay off roads from Saturday evening through Monday - conditions will be extremely hazardous
- Assume all downed power lines are live and dangerous - stay far away and report to REC immediately
- Use generators safely - **OUTDOORS ONLY**, away from windows and doors
- Never use grills, camp stoves, or other open flame devices indoors for heating
- Conserve heat if power is lost by closing off unused rooms and covering windows
- Check on elderly or vulnerable neighbors if it is safe to do so
- If you must travel, tell someone your route and expected arrival time

## STAFF EXPECTATIONS

RCPS staff should prioritize their own safety and that of their families during this storm. There is no expectation of remote work during power outages or hazardous conditions. Staff members experiencing personal emergencies or who need assistance should contact their building administrator.

Once we return to school, we understand that some families may still be without power or dealing with storm-related challenges. We will work flexibly with families as they navigate recovery from this storm. Our counseling staff will be available to support students who experienced stress during the extended closure.

The safety of our students, families, and staff is our absolute priority. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate this significant weather event together.

This is what our Rappahannock County community does best - we look out for one another. Please check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or may need assistance. If your family needs support of any kind during this storm, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Stay warm, stay safe, and we look forward to welcoming our students back as soon as conditions safely allow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Grimsley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Dr. Shannon Grimsley  
Superintendent / Cheerleader in Chief  
Rappahannock County Public Schools  
[sgrimsley@rappahannockschools.us](mailto:sgrimsley@rappahannockschools.us)