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Dear Vista Parents/Guardians:

With winter weather right around the corner we want to provide as a refresher, information, and guidance regarding transportation when a student's home school district delays opening, closes or sends students home early. The Vista School serves students from 40 different school districts in 8 Central Pennsylvania counties. We have compiled some FAQs related to this issue:

•**How does Vista announce information regarding weather-related schedule changes?** Vista independently makes decisions about delays, closures, and early dismissals for the school. These decisions are communicated out to our staff and families via the One-Call System and are also announced via email, our Facebook page, and our website. **If you are unsure that Vista has your most up to date email address, cell phone number, or home number, please email Student Services at studentservices@vistaautismservices.org with this updated contact information. There is a text option available to receive alerts via text from our One-Call System. Please text the word "Alert" to 22300 to begin receiving text notifications.**

•**Who is responsible for my student's transportation needs during inclement weather?** Vista has a very limited role with respect to student transportation services. Your home school district is solely responsible for those services, and many of them enter into contracts with outside vendors to provide regular service.

•**How do I know which delay, early dismissal, or closing I should follow?** Always follow the most severe delay or closure between Vista and your district. For example, your district may have a 2hr delay, but Vista is closed. In this scenario, Vista is closed, and your child will not have school. If your home school district is dismissing at 12pm and Vista is dismissing at 1pm transportation will follow your home school district's 12pm dismissal unless contacted otherwise by the district or transportation provider.

•**Can I transport my child if Vista is open, but my district is closed?** Yes. Please make this decision with the safety of roads in your area taken into consideration. If you will be transporting your child, please call ahead so we know they will be coming to school. Remember you will also have to transport your child home as your district is not providing transportation in this scenario.

•**When will Vista make-up a day that was missed for inclement weather?** Make-up days are built into our school calendar and will be used in the numbered sequence noted on the calendar. Further clarification can be found on the school calendar. For example, if we have a closure next week, we would then be in session on January 16, 2023 (make-up day #1).

•**What happens if I have an IEP or team meeting scheduled on the day of a delay, early dismissal, or cancellation?** If Vista has a "Modified Schedule", any morning IEP meeting is cancelled and will be rescheduled. Afternoon IEP meetings would continue as scheduled. If Vista is closed, the IEP meeting is cancelled and will be rescheduled. If Vista is having an early dismissal, someone will be in contact with you regarding the status of your meeting (based on the timing of the early dismissal).

•**With Pennsylvania schools now instructing in distance learning formats, would an inclement weather day of closure allow instruction to shift to distance learning to avoid making up a 'snow day?'** The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) allows only public-school entities to apply for 'flexible instruction days' that can be used in these types of situations. The Vista School has reached out to PDE for clarification and confirmed that we as a Licensed Private Academic School/Approved Private School are not eligible to apply. **Therefore, we are not permitted to shift to distance learning on days of inclement weather closure.** Should this change, we will communicate accordingly.

•**What will happen to instructional hours for the year when we utilize a modified schedule?** The Vista School normally well exceeds the required instructional hours required from PDE. This will require us to track total hours lost with any delays/early dismissals due to inclement weather and **potentially** 'add' hours back into the school calendar via the utilization of at least some part or all of a 'make up day'. We would do this in the instance that our total amount of instructional hours are not meeting the required amount for the school year as indicated by PDE. Should this expectation change, we will communicate accordingly.

•**What happens when Vista announces an early dismissal?** The Vista School will always base our student and staff attendance on the safety of the road conditions in our area. If we were to have started the day in session and the weather requires us to dismiss early, we will alert families, LEA's, and transportation companies as soon as possible. We generally (outside of emergency situations) provide at least 1.5 hours' notice before an early dismissal to allow for our counties of farthest distance to get to our campus. We will keep to this standard (and provide even more notice when possible) and may have situations (depending on the weather and road conditions at hand) in which we dismiss early. In these situations, just as in modified schedule, we will track hours to determine if any make up instructional hours will be required.

We appreciate your kind attention to these helpful tips. Student safety remains our number one priority, especially when winter weather strikes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Miller".

Jason Miller, Ed.D.
Executive Director of Educational Services