

WEATHER AND EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING NOTICE FOR THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 279
Educational Service Center
11200 - 93rd Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN 55369

(Osseo Area Schools)
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TO: ALL SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENTS AND PERSONNEL

June 2007

The purpose of this notice is to provide you with information about possible school closings, early dismissal, and other interruptions to school or school activities. We believe that when parents, employees, students, and others are informed of procedures and rationale in advance, they can react responsibly when severe weather or other emergencies occur.

General considerations

- ◆ Emergency decisions are made by District 279 to protect students from the potential harm of severe weather and other hazards.
- ◆ District 279 will conduct school in the normal manner if there is reasonable expectation that 85% or more of the students will be in attendance in most schools.
- ◆ When possible, decisions to close school or delay the start of school will be made by **5:30 a.m.**, and the decision to dismiss school early will be made by 11:00 a.m.
- ◆ Delayed school starts due to emergencies will only be considered under unusual circumstances. A one-hour delayed start means that your bus pickup time will be one hour later and your school's starting time will be one hour later than usual. Dismissal will be at the normal time.
- ◆ District 279 will do everything possible to avoid early dismissal once school is in session.
- ◆ If school is dismissed early, dismissal will be in the usual order: first high school, then junior high school, and elementary school last. This is done to minimize disruption caused by changing schedules, and to transport older children home first to await younger brothers and sisters.
- ◆ District 279 will work closely with police, fire, road maintenance, and other appropriate offices as decisions regarding dismissal, closing, etc., are made.

Communications

Communication during any emergency is critical to safety. Listen to local radio and television. We will report early-morning decisions to stations by **5:30 a.m.** and mid-day decisions by 11:00 a.m. No announcement is made when school follows a normal schedule.

School closing announcements and other emergency school-related instructions will be broadcast on radio and TV. **Districtwide school closure will be broadcast as "Osseo District 279."**

The radio and TV stations we notify are:

- WCCO TV - Channel 4 / WCCO Radio 830 AM
- KSTP TV - Channel 5
- KMSP TV - FOX 9 / WFTC TV - UPN 29
- KARE 11 TV
- Northwest Community TV - Cable 12

Unless you have an extremely unusual circumstance, **please do not phone the school** with questions during an emergency. In case of emergency, please call the main school district number, 763-391-7000, or check the district Web site at www.district279.org. Information will be updated as quickly as it becomes available.

Procedures for extreme cold

Extreme wind chill can be very dangerous. If the wind chill, based on revised wind chill calculations, is -35 degrees or colder at **5:30 a.m.** and predicted to remain that low or become worse, school may be cancelled. Usually other adverse weather conditions are necessary to cause school interruptions for wind chill. Please remember to dress children accordingly.

Procedures during snow or ice storms

If a storm occurs or continues during the night, we survey conditions by driving critical roads in both the east and west sides of the district, consult with police departments in Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove if we can, consult with snow removal officials if we can, and follow radio weather reports. A decision will be made by **5:30 a.m.** whether school can be started with reasonable safety. If a storm occurs or worsens during a school day, the same procedures will be followed with a decision by 11:00 a.m. Once school is started, we will be very reluctant to dismiss early because of the problem of sending a substantial number of children home to locked houses. While snowstorms in excess of 10 inches of snow with high winds can cause school to be cancelled or dismissed early, most heavy snows or cold will **not** result in school closure.

Procedures for other emergencies

It is not possible to outline all hazards and conditions that can cause dismissal or disruption of the school day. Most hazards rarely occur. Parents should be assured that District 279 will cooperate fully with other emergency management agencies and officials whenever dangers due to fire, tornadoes, power failure, gas leaks, or other emergencies occur. Whether the danger affects a single building or all of our buildings, we will do everything within our power to protect the health and safety of the children.

When school is cancelled, all school-related activities are also cancelled

When District 279 schools close, generally everything closes including: all District 279 extracurricular activities, Community Education youth and adult classes, Kidstop, Four Star Express, Early Childhood Family Education programs, and events scheduled by non-District groups through the Community Education Department.

Makeup days

District 279 Board policy requires at least 170 days of classes each year. There are 172 student contact days in the 2007-2008 school calendar, as well as several parent/student conference days as identified by each building. If school is cancelled, a decision may be made to make up the day. If more than two days are cancelled, subsequent cancelled days must be made up.

Other considerations

Given the unpredictable nature of weather and potential for extreme conditions, District 279 bases its decisions about late starts and early dismissals on the best information it has at the time. We assume that most adults are not at home during the day to supervise students in the event of an early dismissal or delayed start. Schools will try to serve lunch if an early dismissal is called.

Obligation of parents

Parents should be certain that their children are appropriately clothed, instructed, and otherwise prepared for emergencies, particularly weather emergencies. Parents should listen to the radio, television news, or check our Web site at www.district279.org during times of severe weather. **If parents disagree with a decision to hold school on a day when they feel the weather is hazardous, they are encouraged to keep their children home.**

Other things you should know...

- ◆ Each school has prepared an Emergency Plan to deal with crisis situations.
- ◆ Students will only be released to parents or individuals authorized on the student's emergency card. It is important to keep this information up to date.
- ◆ Buses will not be loaded if there is a bad storm, or if one is imminent.
- ◆ If hazards exist outside, students and staff will take shelter inside the building. Visitor access may be temporarily restricted.
- ◆ Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown exercises are held in all schools. When possible, fire drills will be conducted when the weather is good.