

SEVERE WEATHER & EMERGENCY INFORMATION 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

Generally, you can expect that school will be held, even in severe weather.

Osseo Area Schools will conduct school in the normal manner if there is a reasonable expectation that 85% or more of the children will be in attendance. If the wind chill, according to the National Weather Service, is 35° below zero (minus 35°) or colder at 5:30 a.m. and *predicted to remain that low or become worse*, school may be cancelled. In most cases, however, the combined effects of snow, ice and wind are considered in decisions that would involve disrupting the school day.

If you disagree with a decision to hold school on a day when you believe the weather is hazardous, you are encouraged to keep your child home and call the school absence line. The absence will be an excused absence.

When a storm occurs or continues throughout the night, district personnel survey conditions and monitor weather reports. Administrators also consult with transportation vendors and other school officials. ***Most heavy snows or cold weather will not result in school closure.***

During times of severe weather, parents are advised to listen to the radio and television news, or to check the district website: www.district279.org.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, DELAYED STARTS AND EARLY RELEASE

When possible, decisions to close or delay the start of school will be made by 5:30 a.m. School delays due to weather conditions will be considered only under unusual circumstances. A two-hour delayed start means that your bus pick-up and school starting times will be two hours later than usual. Dismissal will be at the normal time.

In order to avoid sending children to locked homes, Osseo Area Schools will do everything possible to avoid early dismissal once school is in session. If a storm occurs or worsens during a school day, the same procedures described above will be followed, and a decision to close will be made by 11:00 a.m. If a tornado warning or severe weather is imminent, buses will not be loaded and students will not be dismissed. If school will be dismissed at mid-day, lunch may be served. Schools are dismissed in the usual order: senior high, then junior high, then elementary. This order allows older siblings to be the first to arrive home to await younger brothers and sisters.

When District 279 schools close, generally everything closes, including all extracurricular activities, community education youth and adult classes, Kidstop, 4 Star Express, early childhood programs, and events scheduled by non-district groups through the community education department.

HOW PARENTS AND GUARDIANS CAN HELP DURING SEVERE WEATHER AND EMERGENCIES

- **Make sure your family has an emergency plan** and that your children know what to do if schools close early. Parents/guardians are responsible for making sure their student(s) can get into their house safely if school closes early.
- **Make sure that your emergency contact information at your child's school is current.** This includes daytime phone numbers for parents and names of individuals who are authorized to pick up your children if they must be released early. Students will only be released to their parents or individuals authorized on the student's emergency card. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their child is picked up by an authorized person or can get into their house safely if school closes early.
- **Ensure that your children are appropriately clothed** with mittens, hats, boots, and coats suitable for cold, snowy weather.
- **Elementary school students are expected to go outdoors when outdoor recess is held.** Schools cannot honor parent requests to keep children in the classroom for recess because duty-free periods are provided for teachers at this time and the rooms are not under teacher supervision.



(OVER)

COMMUNICATING ABOUT EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency that results in school closings, delay in the start of school, or early dismissal, parents will be contacted through an automated calling system. If possible, emergency information will be posted on the district's website, www.district279.org. School closing announcements and other emergency information also will be broadcast on the following radio and television stations as "Osseo District 279":



Radio

- WCCO: 830 AM

Television

- WCCO: Channel 4
- KSTP: Channel 5
- FOX: Channel 9
- KARE: Channel 11
- NW Community Cable: Channel 12

Unless it is absolutely necessary, please do not call your child's school with questions during an emergency. School telephone lines must remain open for emergency communications. If you need assistance, you may call the main district telephone number: 763-391-7000.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

ISD 279-Osseo Area Schools has developed a comprehensive emergency plan with the help of local law enforcement, emergency management, and public health officials.

The district's emergency plan is based on an "all-hazard" approach that incorporates five universal response actions. Universal response actions are clear, standardized directives that can be implemented quickly in a variety of emergency situations. When an emergency happens, the school principal or district administrator will implement one of the following response actions:

- **Evacuation:** All students and staff will exit the building. If the school grounds are not safe, students may be relocated to another site.
- **Reverse Evacuation:** All students and staff will move into the building. Exterior doors and windows will be locked and public access to the school will be temporarily suspended.
- **Severe Weather Shelter:** All students and staff will be moved to designated shelter areas within the building. If severe weather strikes during dismissal, buses may be delayed.
- **Shelter-in-Place:** All students and staff will move into the building. Windows will be closed and ventilation systems will be temporarily disabled to keep out contaminants.
- **Lockdown:** All students and staff will secure their areas by locking doors and windows. Public access to the school will be temporarily suspended.

Emergency drills are routinely held in all schools to prepare students and staff. Please note that during a Reverse Evacuation or Lockdown, access to the building will be restricted to the public, including parents. After the emergency response action is lifted, you will be allowed to enter the building.

In the event of an emergency, we may need to contact you. *Please make sure that your emergency contact information at your child's school is current.* This includes daytime phone numbers for parents and names of individuals who are authorized to pick up your children if they must be released early. **Children will be released only to their parents or individuals authorized on the student's emergency card.**

While emergency events are rare, parents can be assured that the district works closely with emergency partners, including police, fire and medical, to be prepared. All of our plans are focused on protecting the health and safety of our students.