

WEATHER & EMERGENCY INFORMATION FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

COLD WEATHER PROCEDURES

Parents and guardians should ensure that their children are appropriately clothed with mittens, hats, and coats. Extremely cold weather can be very dangerous. Minnesotans should be accustomed to many days of heavy snow and freezing temperatures during the winter months.

ISD 279 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° 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 necessary to cause school interruptions.

Parents, please make sure you have an emergency plan on which you can rely if schools close 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. Children will be released only 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.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, DELAYED STARTS AND EARLY RELEASE

During times of severe weather, parents are advised to listen to the radio and television news, or to check the district Web site: www.district279.org. **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 by driving critical roads on the east and west sides of the district and monitoring radio weather reports. If possible, administrators also consult with the Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove police departments and snow removal officials. While storms with high winds and snowfall of ten or more inches may cause schools to be cancelled or dismissed early, *most heavy snows or cold weather will not result in school closure.*

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 only be considered 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, ISD 279-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. School staff may serve lunch, if a midday dismissal is decided. Schools are dismissed in the usual order: first – senior high; second – junior high; and third – elementary. This order minimizes disruption caused by altering schedules and allows older siblings to be the first to arrive home to await younger brothers and sisters.

When ISD 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.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

In the event of an emergency that results in school closings, delay in the start of school, or early dismissal, instructions will be phoned to parents through the Connect-ED automated calling system. Information will be broadcast on local television and radio stations, and, if possible, information will be posted on the district's Web site, www.district279.org.

School closing announcements and other emergency information 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
- KMSP Fox: Channel 9
- KARE: Channel 11
- NW Community Cable: Channel 12

Unless it is absolutely necessary, please do not call the school with questions during an emergency. Our telephone lines must remain open for emergency communications. In you need further 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. Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown exercises are held in all schools.

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.

Please note that during a Reverse Evacuation or Lockdown, access to the building is 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.