

## School Closure/Delays/Communication Plan

Minnesota winter weather is not always predictable. We understand that the decision to close or delay the school starting time affects our families. It isn't an easy decision for us and we carefully reflect on many factors when deciding. It is our preference to stay open, whenever possible, to minimize impact on our families. We respect the right of parents to decide to keep their children at home should we decide to have school on a day when they do not feel safe. Parental discretion will always be considered. ***Families are encouraged to develop a contingency plan with their child to prepare for a possible school closure or early dismissal, in an event of an emergency situation.***

The Director of Education makes the decision to close, after consulting with their administrative team. The decision-maker may also consult with administrators from other surrounding schools for additional perspective.

- If there is a high probability of extreme weather or other known circumstances, the decision may be made the night before and families will be notified at that time.
- If weather is questionable, the decision may not be made until early morning. Messages will be sent to families by 6:00 a.m.

### **Factors Considered for School Closing - Safety First**

The primary focus upon making a decision is based on **safety of the children, staff, and teachers**. We will always err on the side of safety first.

- **Forecasts, Severe Weather Timing and Duration of the Severity.** We continually monitor the forecast from the National Weather Service.
- **Temperature and Wind Chill**  
Wind chill factor and sustained low temperatures are deemed hazardous. We consider this for both driving and building safety. (If we had to evacuate the building, could our children wait safely outside, without getting frostbite?)
- **Transportation**  
We are a commuter school and we try to include all families when decisions are made. If school is open and parents deem it not safe to drive their children to school, this is an excused absence. Families should still please call the school to report the absence.
- **Travel Conditions**  
Hazardous travel conditions (making it difficult for cars to travel safely; road conditions and visibility), both current and those projected become worsening in the hours ahead.
- **School Operation Challenges**  
Facility needs are also considered. Roads, sidewalks, and doors need to be open for emergency vehicle access if the building is occupied. School may also be closed or delayed due to dangerous non-winter weather, unforeseeable extenuating circumstances such as a power outage, broken water pipes or the like.
- **School Status**  
Status of surrounding schools, including Minneapolis and St. Paul Schools (However, just because they are closed, doesn't mean we wouldn't remain open.)

### **Communications - Please check messages regularly, when weather is questionable.**

Families will be notified as soon as the decision is made to allow them to make alternate plans and arrangements for their children.

All school closing information will be communicated to families by the administrative staff via text messaging, email, phone calls, when possible, social media may also be used. When you see a message from us, we ask that you please respond so we know you have received the information. If we have not heard from you, we will attempt phone contact.