

CMSD

INCLEMENT WEATHER &
SCHOOL CANCELTION PLAYBOOK



The Phone Decision Tree for Group Communications

(PRIOR TO 4:30AM) OR (DURING REGULAR OPERATING HOURS)



Incident
(Power Outage/Weather
Related/ Heating – Cooling)

Operation Validates
(Creel to Thompson)

Issue Not Resolved –
Decision needed by
5:00am
CEO Decision
Open/Close
(District
Specific)

**ISSUE
RESOLVED
CEO DEBRIEFED**

Issue Not Resolved –
Decision needed by
5:00am
CEO Decision
Open/Close
(School
Specific)

District Closure

- Communications Updates website/IVR/notifies TV stations
- Chief Florence notifies principals/ NLS (Blizzard Bag or Calamity Day determined)

- EMIS-Document calamity or blizzard day
- Transportation

- Food Service
- Communication-draft a BOE alert for CEO

School/Site Based Closure

- Communications-work with Principal/NL (IVR)
- Transportation

- Food Service
- Sr Chiefs/Chief School

- Communication-draft a BOE alert for CEO

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELTATION

Who decides to close schools?

- Under Ohio law, the Superintendent of District (CEO) is the only person permitted to close or alter the schedule of individual schools or the school district.

What factors are considered when deciding to close schools?

- While school closures are a result of poor weather conditions, other factors can also impact the decision to close schools. Regardless of the issue, we decide to open/close schools or modify the school day schedule based upon a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:
 - Weather forecasts (including those from a weather alert service).
 - The timing of expected weather and if conditions are expected to worsen or improve.
 - Information on road conditions from our transportation staff and local officials.
 - Impact on our transportation fleet (diesel fuel begins to gel at sub-zero temperatures).
 - Building conditions, such as whether the buildings have electricity, heat, and water.
 - Amount of accumulated snow and ice, our ability to clear school parking lots and sidewalks, and
 - Ambient (surrounding air) temperature and the windchill factor.

When is the decision made to close for the day?

- Our goal is to announce cancellations as soon as we can, so we are constantly monitoring weather forecasts and road conditions and will make an announcement the night before whenever possible.
- If weather conditions are such that a determination the night before is **impossible, the CEO and the Operations team will decide no later than 5:00 a.m.**
- Remember that unusual weather conditions may force us to decide after this time.
- Check the District's website and local television and radio stations to stay up-to-date on school closings.

How are staff and parents notified of a closing?

A variety of methods are used to inform families about the cancellation of classes, extracurricular activities, field trips, and/or athletic events due to inclement weather:

- All families and staff will be alerted through an automated call (IVR), email, and text message from the District's phone system. To receive this notification, it is essential to have your updated contact information on file in the Parent Portal.
- We encourage all parents to monitor the transportation app for information pertaining to your child's bus in case of delays.
- Follow CMSD on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), or check our [CMSD website](#). As soon as the decision is made to cancel classes, we will share the news and other schedule updates on our website and social media pages.
- Monitor the news on local television and radio stations, which we notify of all closings.

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELATION

Will CMSD close in the morning if conditions worsen?

- Because district buses begin picking up students as **early as 5:30 a.m.**, even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse an early-morning decision for schools to remain open – without potentially endangering students.
- Once the decision to open the schools is made, many parents rely on it and leave for work. If we send students back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses.
- If conditions worsen during the school day, we may need an early dismissal, but we will give as much notice as possible through various communication channels.

What happens in the event of an early release?

- If the situation arises that an early release is necessary, the announcement will be made as soon as possible.
- After-school activities will be closed if there is an early release due to weather.
- Decisions about school activities will be made and announced at the time of the early release.
- The building administrator will stay on site to ensure that all students and staff are safely released.

Do schools close automatically when forecasters predict severe weather?

- The school district monitors a wide variety of forecast sources as well as having district staff drive the city roadways as early as 4:00 a.m. to obtain as accurate a view of the conditions as possible.
- Weather forecasts are only sometimes consistent or accurate, and it is impractical to rely solely on these reports. While we prefer to make our decision based on visible or reported conditions, we do consider forecasts to determine if conditions are expected to improve or worsen throughout the day.

Will buses run on time during inclement weather?

- When the District's schools are in session, all bus stops will be serviced, even during inclement weather.
- Buses may run late for several reasons, including traffic and road conditions. If your child must wait at the bus stop longer than usual, take measures to ensure your child is wearing suitable clothing for the day's weather.
- Parents should also have a contingency plan in case a bus is running extremely late or breaks down before reaching the bus stop.
- Make your child aware of what to do or who to call if the bus does not arrive. Identify a neighbor, friend, or reliable "student buddy" who can help in the event of an unexpected emergency.

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELTATION

Will schools automatically close when the temperature is below zero, and at what wind chill factor will the District be closed?

- There is no set temperature at which the District automatically closes schools, but the ambient temperature is one of the many factors (along with wind chill, road conditions, and weather forecasts) considered when making a school-closure decision.
- Schools can usually remain open when the ambient air temperature is below zero. Parents should ensure that their children are dressed appropriately for expected weather conditions.
- Because many media and weather sources report ambient temperatures and windchill factors throughout the area (often reporting different temperatures or windchills simultaneously), we have not published a specific temperature or windchill factor that would automatically close our schools.

When school is closed for the day, are after-school activities also canceled?

- Evening activities, events, and athletic practices are typically canceled when schools are closed for the day.
- However, there are occasions when an event might occur, even when schools have been closed. Please monitor the District's website and social media outlets for special instructions.

What should I do to prepare for school closing?

- All families should plan for their children during a school closure.
- Children should know where to go if a parent will not be home and how to contact the parent, guardian, or another adult with whom backup arrangements are made.
- Parent contact information, including work and cell phone numbers, should be kept up to date with the school.
- If you are instructed to pick up your student at a location other than their school due to a closure, you will be asked to present a photo ID before the student will be released to your care.
- Students should be dressed appropriately for cold weather, as it is impossible to predict when a school might have to be evacuated due to an emergency.

Does CMSD have a plan for a delayed start?

- The District will not have a delayed start for all schools. CMSD provides school bus transportation to more than 7,000 CMSD students. Because our 301 buses serve many schools in a multi-tiered routing system, operating a delayed-start schedule is not feasible.

But

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELTATION

When a school has a delay what schedule changes do I need to know if school is delayed?

- Each school has plans in place for both one-hour and two-hour delays. The information on the delays will be shared with all parents via phone, text, media, and online.
- Transportation will run by the time of the delay (i.e., either one or two hours later than scheduled)
- Principals of impacted buildings will already have one-hour and two-hour delay schedules and will communicate that information to students and families.
- Before-school extracurricular activities will be canceled. After-school activities will be held as normal unless specified via district communication channels.
- Care Before School programs will be canceled in the event of a delay.
- For one-hour delays, PreK will start one hour after regular time. In the event of a two-hour delay, PreK will be cancelled.
- Decisions to continue scheduled field trips on delayed school days will be made on a case-by-case basis by the school.

What if I believe it is unsafe for my child to come to school because of weather conditions in my neighborhood?

- Parents and guardians are their children's legal representatives, and it is their right to decide what is best for their children regarding safety concerns.
- The option to keep a child home from school when the parent considers the weather conditions excessively dangerous is always at the parent's discretion, and the school understands and respects the decision.
- However, if school is in session, the parent should notify the school that their child will remain at home on a "Parental Excused Absence." While the absence will be considered "excused," it will still be counted as an absence for the day.

What happens when public services or utilities are disrupted?

- Due to circumstances beyond our control, schools may experience power outages or other emergencies, such as gas leaks, water service disruptions, etc. Should such events occur, District personnel will make every effort to ensure the comfort and safety of students and staff.
- While disruptive, schools can often remain in session when without power. The District does not want to send students home unsupervised or to a home without electricity or water.
- If the CEO determines that classes cannot continue for the duration of the day, the District will notify parents by phone, email, and text message via the auto-dialer system, notify the media, and post an announcement on the District's website and social media outlets.

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELATION

What about student activities?

- **If school is canceled, all buildings will be closed for routine business during the day, BUT plan on evening school activities to be HELD as scheduled.**
- If weather conditions do not improve in the morning, the District will make the decision to cancel evening activities by **1 p.m.** on most days.
 - The District will communicate event cancellations through the principals and group leaders, the website, and social media. Unless you hear otherwise, plan for the following: Athletic team practices and/or games will go on **as scheduled***
 - Extracurricular group activities and meetings will go on as scheduled.
 - Planned events like music concerts, drama performances, and art shows will be held as scheduled.
 - Field trips will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - Care Before & Care After School will be canceled.

**Please note that athletic contests involving CMSD teams (both home and away) will also involve other school districts, and it may take time to determine a final decision on competitions. If possible, we hope to have any announcements made by 1 p.m. Communication will be made via coaches, the District and Schools website, and social media.*

What if there's severe weather over the weekend?

- Cleveland Metropolitan School District will make every effort to hold events. Unless the school district notifies you, plan for the event to take place.
- The Transportation Department will decide if buses cannot be dispatched and must be canceled for weekend activities involving school groups.
 - For morning events, the decision will be made by 5:45 a.m.
 - For afternoon events, the decision will be made by 1 p.m.
- Administrators, coaches, instructors, and/or group leaders will communicate with the parents and students involved.

How can I make sure I am informed of school closings/cancellations?

- The best thing you can do is ensure that your emergency contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses, in the Parent Portal is accurate.
- In most cases, we will use the District's auto-dialer system to notify parents of closings or emergencies via phone calls, email, and text messages. The automated system pulls families' contact information directly from our student database. If your phone number or email address is incorrect

FAQS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CANCELATION

in our database, you will not be able to receive these important updates.

- When severe weather is forecast, please monitor the District website, social media channels, and local news media outlets for information and updates.

What are the best CMSD information sources?

- **Website:** clevelandmetroschools.org
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/CLMetroSchools
- **Facebook:** Facebook.com/clevemetrosd
- **Instagram:** Instagram.com/clevelandmetroschools
- **CMSD Ombuds Office** 24-hour message line - **216.838.0090**