EAST MAINE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

Emergency Closing Information
Winter 2016-2017

Parents & students should assume that classes are in session at the normal time unless otherwise notified.

But there may be times when school districts in this community close schools because of severe weather-related conditions or other emergency situations.

Districts Work Together

School superintendents -- from Maine Twp. High School District 207, Des Plaines District 62, East Maine District 63, Park Ridge-Niles District 64, and Pennoyer District 79 -- develop guidelines related to closures and work together on closing decisions. There may be a rare occasion, however, when any individual district may need to make an independent decision based on existing conditions and the needs of its school population. Districts understand that individual views of weather-related school closings vary and that not everyone will always agree with district decisions.

Safety First

However, please know that any decision is made with student safety as our top priority.

How We Decide: Priority on Safety

Our first priority is the safety of students and staff. At the same time, we know that closings create child care and work schedule problems for families. For many reasons, we always prefer to keep schools open. In deciding, superintendents consult with local municipal departments and use National Weather Service data. Some factors we consider include:

- Safety of students and staff.
- Severity of weather (extreme cold, flooding, etc.)
- Timing of the weather.
- Ability of vehicles to travel safely and ability of students to walk to and from school safely.
- Operable condition of our buildings and ability to maintain safe conditions around our buildings, sidewalks and parking lots.

Scenarios

School is Not Cancelled – **Parents and students should assume that classes are in session at the normal time unless otherwise notified.**

Cancellation – School cancelled due to weather or other emergency conditions that make the operation of school facilities unsafe.

Late Start – This option is used only when National Weather Service indicates that an early-morning Wind Chill Warning will likely be downgraded to a Wind Chill Advisory later in the morning.

Early Dismissal – Used only when necessary.

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Wind-Chill Warning - Schools Closed

Schools will be closed under the condition of a wind-chill warning, which indicates that life-threatening conditions and a risk to safety exist. Measures should be taken to safeguard life and property immediately. **A wind-chill warning is typically issued when the wind-chill will be -30° F or colder OR the actual temperature is -15° F or colder.**

Wind-Chill Advisory - Schools Open

A wind-chill advisory is issued when conditions do not meet the wind-chill warning criteria but still cause significant inconvenience. The weather during a wind-chill advisory is not life threatening but presents conditions that may result in inconvenience or pose moderate risk to safety. **A wind-chill advisory is typically issued when the wind chill is -20 degrees F or colder.**

- Schools are open; student attendance is expected.
- Extracurricular activities will be evaluated and may be suspended if conditions persist; updates will be posted on school websites.

Data Source: The National Weather Service (NWS) is the primary meteorological source to determine and declare weather conditions such as snow forecasts, wind-chill advisory or wind-chill warnings. *www.weather.gov/*

How We Notify Parents and Students

When school districts deem it necessary to close schools or in the event of any other school emergency, parents can expect to receive an automated phone call and e-mail. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide contact information and/or preferences to the school. **School closure decisions will usually be made by 5:30 a.m. This allows superintendents to monitor weather overnight to avoid unnecessary closures.** A decision will be made the night before only if it is certain that conditions the next morning will warrant closure. Closing information is also available through:

- School and district websites,
- WGN's Emergency Closings website: *www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/*
- Major radio and TV sources
- School and District social media accounts

Family Situation

Any decision to cancel school or alter the school day is based on general safety conditions for all students and staff. Districts know that conditions may vary for each student or family. If, in the event of severe weather when schools are open, you feel it is unsafe to send your student, contact the attendance office.