



Mr. Stacy Stevens
Superintendent

West County R-IV School District

1124 MAIN STREET - LEADWOOD, MISSOURI 63653 - (573) 562-7535
FAX: 562-7510

Dear Parent/Guardian:

According to the National Weather Service we have reached the time of year in which the threat of tornadoes is greatest for our area. If the event would occur during the school day the District has a plan in place to protect your child. The time that your child has the potential to be the most vulnerable is during transportation to and from the school.

Please be aware the District *will not* run busses while there is an active tornado warning. A warning, different than a watch, is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

This would be a good time to review safety practices and recommendations in order to keep your child safe. I would encourage you to talk with your child so they know what to do in the event of severe weather.

Should a warning be issued at the end of the school day, we would keep your child at school and delay school dismissal until after the warning has expired. If you would like to pick your child up, you would be allowed to do so, although, I would encourage everyone to avoid driving when there is a risk of severe weather.

We have a number of students that walk or ride a bike to school each day. If your child is waiting at a bus stop, walking, or riding a bike, it is important they understand what to do if severe weather occurs. If caught in the open they should seek a safe place immediately. The chances of encountering falling trees, power lines, and lightning are greater than encountering the tornado itself. The basement of a sturdy building would be best, but lying flat in a ditch or low-lying area may be the only thing available. A culvert in a ditch may be a good choice if there is no rain, but if there is rain, flash flooding may be more dangerous and likely than the tornado.

District officials closely monitor the weather when there is a chance that it may become severe. If a tornado warning would be issued while busses are in transit with students on them we would make a decision based on the best information available as to continue the route or to seek shelter for the bus. If available we would also consider evacuating students to any nearby buildings.

When severe weather is possible, and it is determined that we need to delay the start of the school day, dismiss early or delay dismissal from school we would contact our parents through our Black Board all school alert system and would also provide information via the following radio stations; KFMO, KREL, B104, and KTJJ. We will do our best to get information out as soon as possible so that you can plan accordingly.

Respectfully,

Stacy Stevens
Superintendent of Schools



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NOTICE

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The winter season is upon us. Our District staff understands that our decision to open or close schools in bad weather has a big impact on families. We also understand that our students are better served—both academically and socially—by being in school. But as always, our top priority is the safety of our students.

❖ HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISIONS?

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close the schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- ▶ **Information on road conditions from transportation staff and other pertinent officials.** We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the District. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the District may be dangerous. Also, we must consider that some high school students drive to school.
- ▶ **Amount of snow and ice accumulated.**
- ▶ **Whether precipitation is continuing.**
- ▶ **Building conditions (such as whether we have electricity and heat).**
- ▶ **Parking lot conditions.** Administrators talk to maintenance and custodial staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots and sidewalks.
- ▶ **Temperature and wind chill.** Please remember that some of our students walk to school and some must wait outside for the bus.
- ▶ **Weather predictions.** We prefer not making decisions based on weather predictions, which are not always accurate. But sometimes this is unavoidable.
- ▶ **What other Districts are doing.** We also share information with other local Districts and check whether they are opening or closing.

❖ WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As superintendent of schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based on the above factors.

❖ HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

First and foremost, we notify our parents and students using our Blackboard phone notification system. The notification system calls phone numbers that are on file in our District. Please make sure the phone numbers on file with our school District are correct.

Closing information is given to the following radio and TV stations:

- KTJJ (98.5 FM)
- KREI (800 AM)
- KFMO (1240 AM)
- St. Louis Fox 2 television station

The District will also post on the District website, www.wcr4.org.

❖ **WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?**

The decision is normally made by 6:00 a.m. or earlier so we can notify radio and TV stations and post on our District website. Every effort is made to announce a closing as quickly as possible knowing some parents will have already left for work, leaving their children unsupervised. The most difficult decisions to make are those when sleet or freezing rain occur after buses have already left for their morning routes. The District is constantly communicating with our drivers and monitoring road conditions.

❖ **EARLY OUT CLOSINGS WHEN CONDITIONS WORSEN?**

Occasionally, if conditions worsen while we are in session for the day, the District will have to close early to safely get our students home before conditions worsen to the point of not being able to safely transport them on our busses.

We understand that once we make the decision to open the schools, many parents rely on it and leave for work and/or other appointments. We are mindful of this and if the District has to make an early closing announcement please make the District aware of special arrangements you may have for your children if this event occurs. We will make the early announcements available through the above mentioned District and media outlets.

Although we do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel as though it is safe for your child to attend school because of inclement weather, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Also, discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives if weather conditions worsen.

Hopefully, this explanation helps everyone understand the process that our District staff uses to make the best possible decision for the safety of all our students and staff in our District.

Sincerely,



Stacy Stevens
Superintendent of Schools