



# School Closings and Delays

## *How is the decision made?*

Please know that we do our best to keep our students and staff safe at all times. When it comes to the decision of whether schools remain open or be closed, there is often no perfect decision that everyone can agree upon. We hope this information helps everyone understand the process that we use to make the best possible decision for everyone connected with our schools.

### WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

Under Ohio law, the superintendent of schools is the only person permitted to close or alter the schedule of individual schools or the school district.

### WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

We make every effort to make our decision to close before 6 a.m. so we can notify local television and radio stations and post the closing information to our website and social media pages. Keep in mind that unusual weather conditions may force us to make the decision after this time. In any case, we will notify parents via the automated calling system as the first alert.

### WHAT FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED WHEN MAKING THE DECISION TO CLOSE SCHOOLS?

While school closures are generally a result of poor weather conditions, other factors can also impact the decision to close schools. Regardless of the issue, we make the decision 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, and our ability to clear school parking lots and sidewalks; and ambient (surrounding air) temperature and the wind-chill factor.

### TWO HOUR DELAY

The use of a two-hour delayed school opening may be utilized when the additional two (2) hours would allow for inclement weather to rise to an acceptable level. With the option of the two-hour delay, we will more likely be able to have school and avoid using as many calamity days.

A major part of a two-hour delay school opening involves the transportation of students to schools. Under a two-hour delay schedule, all schools will begin the day two (2) hours later than the regular starting time. The school day will end at the usual time. Students receiving school bus transportation should go to their normal bus stop location two (2) hours later than their regular pick-up time.

As with school closings, the two-hour delay to the start of the school day will be announced through the local media and our telephone message system to parents. If for

any reason the two-hour delay is not sufficient to ensure safe travel, the district will close for the entire day. If this is the case, a second call will be made via our telephone messaging service.

### WILL WE CLOSE SCHOOL IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?

Even if the weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering students. Once we make the decision to open the schools, many parents rely on it and leave for work. If we then send students right back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. If conditions get worse during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal and will give as much notice as possible to parents. Although we do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel that it is safe for your child to get to school, use your best judgment whether or not he or she should attend. If you choose to keep your child at home, his/her absence will be counted as an excused absence. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives as weather conditions worsen.

### HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

As soon as we make the decision to close schools, we will send an automated message via the designated telephone numbers that parents provided. This will be the quickest and easiest way to learn about school closings. In addition, the Berea City Schools will post the closing on the website, [www.berea.k12.oh.us](http://www.berea.k12.oh.us). For those on social media, you can follow the district on Twitter @BereaCSD or Facebook/BereaCSD, as we will also post it there. Do not call the school or bus garage unless it is an emergency.

### 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 a variety of reasons, including traffic and road conditions. Take measures to ensure your child is wearing suitable clothing for the day's weather in the event he/she must wait at the bus stop for a longer than usual time. Parents also should have a contingency plan in the event that a bus is running extremely late or breaks down before reaching the bus stop. Make your child aware of what he/she should do or who to call if the bus does not arrive. Identify a neighbor, friend, or a reliable "student buddy" that can help in the event of an unexpected emergency.

## **WILL SCHOOLS AUTOMATICALLY CLOSE WHEN THE TEMPERATURE IS BELOW ZERO?**

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) taken into consideration when making a school-closure decision. In most cases, schools can remain open when the ambient air temperature is below zero. As such, parents should ensure that their child is dressed appropriately for expected weather conditions.

## **AT WHAT WIND-CHILL FACTOR WILL THE DISTRICT BE CLOSED?**

Because there are many media and weather sources reporting ambient temperatures and windchill factors from throughout the area (often reporting different temperatures or wind chills at the same time) we have not published a specific temperature or wind-chill factor that would automatically close our schools.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU HAVE TO RELEASE STUDENTS EARLY?**

While we do everything possible to avoid sending students home before their scheduled dismissal time, weather or other factors (such as power outages and water line breaks) can cause the district to "Early Release" students. A call using Blackboard will be sent to all primary parent contact phone numbers and a message will be posted on the district's website and social media outlets. Please have an emergency back-up plan in place in the event of an unexpected dismissal.

## **WHEN SCHOOL IS CLOSED FOR THE DAY, ARE AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES CANCELLED AS WELL?**

After-school activities, events and performances are cancelled when schools are closed for the day; however, there are occasions when an event or performance might occur even when schools have been closed. Please monitor your phone and e-mail or the District's website for special instructions. For athletics, follow Twitter @AthleticsBMHS.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR A POSSIBLE SCHOOL CLOSING?**

All families should make arrangements for their children in the event of 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 there are back-up arrangements. 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 school closure, you will be asked to present photo ID before the student will be released to your care. In cold weather, students should be dressed appropriately for the conditions, as it is impossible to predict when a school might have to be evacuated due to an emergency.

## **WHAT IF I BELIEVE IT IS UNSAFE FOR MY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT TO DRIVE TO SCHOOL?**

School bus transportation is widely available across the school district. If parents believe it is unsafe for their high school student to drive to or from school because of weather conditions, the student is welcome to ride their assigned bus. Students can also walk or be driven by a parent or another adult of the parents' choosing. Bus drivers are instructed to pick-up students, even if they do not normally ride the bus.

## **WHAT IF I BELIEVE IT'S UNSAFE FOR MY CHILD TO COME TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?**

Since parents and guardians are the legal representatives for their child, it is their right to decide what is best for their child with respect to safety concerns. The option to keep a child home from school when the parents considers the weather conditions to be excessively dangerous is always at their 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. While the absence will be considered "excused," it will still be counted as an absence for the day and count towards the total number of hours absent.

## **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 disruption, etc. Should events of this nature occur, district personnel will make every effort to provide for student and staff comfort and safety. 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 Superintendent determines that school cannot continue for the duration of the day, the district will notify parents via the all-call system and post an announcement on the district's website and social media outlets.

## **WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WHO ATTEND POLARIS CAREER CENTER?** (in the event that they are open when we are closed).

If the BCSD is closed for the day, we will NOT transport Polaris students. If it is too dangerous for the BCSD to transport our students, we do not transport Polaris students.

## **WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR NON-PUBLIC AND OUT-OF-DISTRICT SCHOOLS?**

The BCSD Transportation Department follows individual school calendars for non-public and out of district schools except when Berea City Schools are closed due to inclement weather. No transportation will be available on those days.