



Winter Weather Season - To Close or Not Close School

The wintry weather can present a challenge for all of us. The staff of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District understands that a decision to open, close or delay school has a major impact on our families. We also know that having our students in school is paramount, as students benefit academically and socially. Most importantly, the District's top priority is our students' safety. The Superintendent of Schools makes the final decision on openings, closings, delays or early dismissals. However, if parents and guardians do not feel that it is safe for your child to get to school, use your best judgment as to whether or not he or she should attend.

How we make our decision

When bad weather affects the area, we make the decision to open/close schools or to modify the school day schedule based upon a careful analysis of many safety factors, including road conditions and winter weather advisories and warnings from the National Weather Service (NWS).

The NWS defines a **Wind Chill Advisory** as a weather event with wind chill values from -15 degrees to -24 degrees and that will lead to nuisance conditions.

The NWS defines a **Wind Chill Warning** as a weather event with wind chill values of -25 degrees and lower and that will pose a risk to life and property.

Generally, if the NWS issues a **Wind Chill Warning** we will almost certainly close school. A Wind Chill Warning is **rare**.

If the NWS issues a **Wind Chill Advisory** and temperatures of -15 degrees or colder will be sustained throughout the school day or if the **Wind Chill Advisory** is combined with any other significant winter weather, then we would want to seriously consider closing school.

If the NWS issues a **Winter Storm Warning** (heavy snow, heavy sleet or a combination of weather events), such as 7 or more inches of snow in a 12-hour or less time period, then most likely school will be closed.

Other factors that go into the decision to close school include:

- Information on road conditions from transportation staff and from local law enforcements and road crews

- We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district; they can be treacherous, even if your street looks clear
- Amount of accumulated snow and ice
- Whether precipitation is expected to continue throughout the day
- Impact on our transportation fleet (school bus diesel fuel begins to gel at an ambient temperature of zero degrees)
- Storm timing
- Building conditions (such as whether there is heat and electricity)
- We also consult with nearby districts

We will always strive to make the decision on the day of the closure by 5:30 a.m. or earlier, so that we can notify radio and TV stations, post the information to our District website, and send our families a robocall so childcare arrangements can be made. **Please make sure your contact information is up-to-date on Infinite Campus, as this is the best way for the District to communicate important announcements.**