

In the event of a school crisis, information would be posted to the district's website and would also be available by calling the district's

Weather and Emergency Hotline
651-982-8143

School safety is our priority

Providing a safe and secure environment for our students to learn is the top priority of Forest Lake Area Schools.

We've taken measures to ensure our staff and students are prepared in the event a crisis situation occurs in one of our buildings.

A comprehensive Crisis Management Plan has been created to guide our staff through a wide variety of situations, including:

- Child abduction or missing child,
- Bus accidents,
- Bomb, radiological or chemical threats,
- Medical emergencies,
- Intruders,
- Gun violence,
- Weather emergencies,
- And much more.

Our staff is also committed to preventing crisis situations by working closely to build relationships with students, creating a climate of respect and acceptance and taking swift and fair discipline action when necessary.

What parents need to know during a crisis

In most situations, the school building is the safest place a student can be. Every effort will be made to keep students safely in the building until they can be reunited with parents.

Your cooperation is needed. In the event of an emergency...

Please visit the district website or call the Weather and Emergency at 651-982-8143 for information and updates about the crisis. Please DO NOT call the school because phone lines will be needed for emergency communication.

Please DO NOT attempt to enter the school until directed by safety personnel.

Please DO go to the parent/student reunification site (information will be posted on-line and on the Weather and Emergency Hotline) to wait to be reunited with your child(ren).

Closing school due to heavy snowfall or frigid temperatures

In our school district, the decision about whether to close school due to snowfall or low temperatures is ultimately the decision of our school superintendent. The superintendent makes this decision in close consultation with the district's transportation supervisor, and he or she must weight a number of factors before making the decision to close, or not to close, school.

Every school district in our state is different. Some are metro, some are rural and some are a little of both. Some have large student populations and others are very small. Some are very big geographically, and others are concentrated in a much smaller area. For example, our district is 215 square miles, while some other nearby districts are 1/10th that size, or less.

All of these factors, and many others, come into play to make each school district's decision unique to that district, even though another district right next door might make a different decision.

The superintendent will always decide on a potential school closing as early as possible in order to help families make appropriate plans. But, there are many factors that need to be taken into account, including accurate hourly temperatures, snowfall amounts and overall road conditions on highways, city streets, county roads, gravel roads and driveways in our cities, towns and rural areas. Because of these many factors and the fact that conditions that can change even from minute to minute, the final decision, in most cases, cannot be made until 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. that morning.

Once the decision is made, the communications and IT departments work as fast as possible to get messages out to families immediately. This can sometimes take between 15 – 30 minutes before an automated phone call is actually delivered.

What happens when school is closed?

Here are a few things to remember for situations where a weather emergency might result in school being canceled:

Whenever school is cancelled, starts late or there is an early school release due to weather issues, our School Age Care (SAC), Sonic and Steps Ahead childcare programs will be open from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the Central Learning Center, Lino Lakes Elementary and Wyoming Elementary for students already enrolled in these programs. Always speak with a childcare staff member when dropping children off.

In case of very extreme winter weather, parents/guardians have the final decision on whether or not to send their children to school.

Also, please note that if school is open, students are expected to attend, however, if parents/guardians feel their children would be in danger they can choose to keep them home. The absence will be excused if the parent/guardian calls to report it. If the school is not contacted, the student will not receive an excused absence. Students who are already in school will not be excused if they choose to go home.

How will I know if school is closed?

All of our district families will be notified of any type of school cancellation through Blackboard Connect, which is our automated phone calling system. Blackboard Connect will also send an email message to parents whose email addresses have been added to our system. Other means by which a school closing will be communicated to families and to the public are:

Local TV stations - WCCO, KARE11, KSTP, KMSP
Radio - WCCO
Newspaper – Star Tribune online
The Forest Lake Area Schools website
Any of our school websites
Our Weather and Emergency Hotline at 651-982-8143

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