

Closings/Delays Due to Inclement Weather - Frequently Asked Questions

The closing or delay of school due to inclement weather is an in-depth process that involves many factors to reach a decision that ensures the operation of school and also keeps students safe. As the weather is often unpredictable, the process is never completely foolproof. The following information may help you understand this process. It is important to note that parents are the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to the safety of their children.

How is information regarding a delay or closing communicated?

Regardless of weather forecasts during evening or morning newscasts, parents and guardians, as well as staff and community members may find closing or delay information via the following resources:

1. The District's website –
2. The District's telephone notification system
3. TV announcements on KDKA-TV, WTAE-TV, WPXI-TV
4. The Deer Lakes Facebook page, the Deer Lakes Twitter page

What sources of information are utilized to make a decision?

The superintendent listens to weather forecasts and reviews notices from the National Weather Service. She also communicates with the District Building/Grounds/Transportation Directors to ensure that parking lots, sidewalks, and the school's buildings are prepared to hold school. The bus garage and local police departments are contacted as well. Starting as early as 4:00 A.M., the superintendent begins a review of information from these sources.

What factors are considered in the decision to close or delay?

- Road conditions
- Operation of school buses
- Weather predictions
- Power, heat, and water in the school buildings
- Parking lot and sidewalk conditions
- Temperature and wind-chill factors

How are decisions made regarding temperature and wind-chill?

The National Weather Service has produced a Wind Chill Chart that provides information with regard to the combination of low temperatures and wind speed to determine wind-chill. The chart also delineates the impact of wind-chill on frostbite. Generally, the superintendent in conjunction with the Northern Area Superintendents will use this chart in addition to data from previously stated sources to determine whether the weather conditions pose a danger to students.

(Click on the National Weather Service link <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter/windchill.shtml> to view the chart.)

What are the choices available regarding the operation of school?

The Deer Lakes School District may run a two-hour delayed opening or close school and use a FID online day.

Who makes the decision?

The superintendent makes the final decision based on the above factors and using the input gained from the sources stated above.

When is the decision made?

The Superintendent makes the final decision no later than 5:20 A.M. so that the telephone notification system, television, and social media can notify all stakeholders so that proper planning and adjustments to schedules can take place. When possible, a decision may be made the night before school.

How soon after the decision is made will the District inform parents?

The Deer Lakes School District notifies parents and students via its telephone notification system as soon as a decision is made. Please note that depending on call volume, the notification system may take several minutes to contact all District parents. Parents are encouraged to monitor the District's website, Facebook and Twitter pages as well as local television stations for the latest closing/delay information.

Who do I contact if I do not receive a phone call/email regarding a school closing/delay?

The District contacts those phone numbers and email addresses provided by parents at the start of the school year. If you are not receiving phone calls or emails regarding school closings/delays, please contact the main office in your child(ren)'s school building(s) directly.

What does it mean if there is a two-hour delay?

A two-hour delay means that the start of school is two hours later than the normal starting time. Correspondingly, please note that your child's bus pick-up time will be delayed by two hours as well.

Will students ever be held at school because of inclement weather?

Severe weather and/or potentially dangerous road conditions that occur at or near the time of afternoon dismissal may require the delayed release of students. Students may be held at school until it is determined that it is safe for school buses to transport students home. If students are to be held at school, the District will make every attempt to contact parents through the District's telephone notification system.

Will students ever be released early because of weather conditions?

The Deer Lakes School District will not have an early dismissal unless specifically directed by Emergency Services, the Pennsylvania's Governor's Office, or Homeland Security. The District does not commonly practice early dismissals because students who are released early may be arriving at their homes where no adult supervision is present.



Wind Chill Chart



		Temperature (°F)																	
		40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
Wind (mph)	Calm	36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46	-52	-57	-63
	5	34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53	-59	-66	-72
	10	32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58	-64	-71	-77
	15	30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61	-68	-74	-81
	20	29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64	-71	-78	-84
	25	28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	-73	-80	-87
	30	28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-82	-89
	35	27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71	-78	-84	-91
	40	26	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65	-72	-79	-86	-93
	45	26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95
	50	25	18	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68	-75	-82	-89	-97
	55	25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98
	60	25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98

Frostbite Times: 30 minutes 10 minutes 5 minutes

Wind Chill (°F) = 35.74 + 0.6215T - 35.75(V^{0.16}) + 0.4275T(V^{0.16})
 Where, T= Air Temperature (°F) V= Wind Speed (mph) Effective 11/01/01

If there is an early dismissal, how will I know?

The Deer Lakes School District will contact parents via the District’s telephone notification system regarding any early release of students from school as with any other decision to close or delay the start of school. Updated information will also be posted on the District’s website, Facebook page, Twitter page, and mobile app regarding any early dismissal. Information will also be communicated to KDKA, WPXI, and WTAE.

Parents are asked to have a plan in place in case of an early dismissal from school. Parents should give students clear instructions as to where they should go if their bus is dropping them off earlier than usual. Also, be sure that your child and the school has been given all current home, work, and mobile numbers, if they need to contact you. Please review any emergency weather plans with your child if severe weather is in the forecast.