Guidelines for School Delays and Closings Due to Inclement Weather

Beliefs

- Weather conditions are both variable and extreme in Northeastern Indiana.
- Concrete rules do not exist for making decisions regarding variable and extreme weather, but these guidelines will serve as a reference for the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District (BHMSD).
- BHMSD believes the public expects schools to be open and to provide education, supervision, and other services (including meals) to its students.
- BHMSD believes all parents are committed to keeping children safe and these parents will dress their children appropriately for the weather when sending the children to school.
- BHMSD recognizes that it's first and foremost a parental decision to determine if a child should attend school on inclement weather days.
- BHMSD respects a parent's determination regarding their child's attendance at school during inclement weather. If school is open, or delayed, because of inclement weather, the school will respect the parent's decision to keep their child at home. Parents are expected to contact the school and inform school officials of their determination. The student will be counted as absent, per state code, and students will be given an opportunity to complete their academic work in the same manner as an excused absence from school.

Communication

- On a normal school day, a delay will be announced no later than 6:30 a.m. Following a delay, a closing will be announced no later than 8:30 a.m.
- Notifications will be sent using ParentSquare. The ParentSquare App can be found in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.
- Following the district's Twitter account, @BHMSDnews, and Facebook page, Bluffton-Harrison MSD, are the most immediate means of communication for delays and/or cancellations. Twitter/Facebook announcements can also be found on the district's website at www.bhmsd.org.
- Automated phone messages are sent within 15 minutes of a delay and/or cancelation decision to all contacts that are provided to the district.
- Additional media outlets are also contacted:
  - WANE TV – Ch 15
  - WPTA TV – Ch 21
  - WISE TV – Ch 33
  - WFFT TV – Ch 55
  - AM/FM Radio
  1190 / 90.3 / 92.3 / 95.1

Delaying or Closing School is Based on Multiple Variables

Freezing Rain/Sleet
- The most unpredictable weather variable is freezing rain/sleet. Freezing rain/sleet is temperature sensitive and fast-occurring. It begins and ends with little notice. When freezing rain/sleet are predicted, the decision regarding school is delayed until the latest possible time in an effort to observe the most current and local conditions. Such a decision will generally be made in the morning.

Snowfall
- Snowfall is more predictable than freezing rain/sleet. Meteorologists generally give a 2-inch variable when predicting snow accumulation. Because of the variation in actual snowfall, the decision regarding school status is delayed until the snow accumulation indicates a need for action. Such a decision will generally be made in the morning.

Extreme Snowfall Situations
- When snow has accumulated to a significant level, or is at such a level with more snowfall predicted, then the decision regarding school may be made the previous evening. A significant level is one in which local authorities have indicated it is unlikely streets will be passable by the following morning.

Extreme Cold (See Chart Below)
- Temperature prediction is increasingly accurate. BHMSD uses the hourly temperature predictions for its zip code from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (noaa.gov). In addition, BHMSD uses the Wind Chill Chart from the NOAA and the National Weather Service showing when frostbite becomes a concern if bare skin is exposed to frigid temperatures for varying amounts of time.
- If air temperature is predicted by NOAA to be -10 degrees or below <u>with calm wind</u> (the starting point for severe wind chill concerns) at 7:00 a.m. the school will consider a two-hour delay for the start of school. If the air temperature is predicted to remain at -10 degrees or below at 9:00 a.m. <u>with calm wind</u> the school will consider closing. Such a determination will be made as early as possible, including the evening before.

Extreme Wind Chill (See Chart Below)
- Wind chill prediction is not as accurate as temperature prediction because wind speed is more variable by time and location. While NOAA observations and predictions are based upon the open conditions of the Fort Wayne International Airport, these conditions can vary from actual weather in Bluffton. Local observations of wind speed will affect the decision regarding delays or closings.
- If wind chill is predicted by NOAA to be at or near -20 degrees or below and if local wind conditions are predicted to mirror the airport wind conditions at 7:00 a.m., the school will consider a two-hour delay for the start of school. If the wind chill is predicted to remain at or near -20 degrees or below and local conditions mirror the airport wind conditions at 9:00 a.m., the school will consider closing. The variability of wind speed will likely cause this decision to be made in the morning.
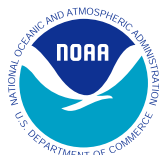
Wind Chill Chart

Temperature (°F)

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

$$\text{Wind Chill (°F)} = 35.74 + 0.6215T - 35.75(V^{0.16}) + 0.4275T(V^{0.16})$$

Where, T = Air Temperature (°F)   V = Wind Speed (mph)

Effective 11/01/01