

# MTSD Weather Delay/Cancellation FAQ

## Who Decides?

The Superintendent is required by law to ensure that the schools are open on all scheduled days unless conditions are unsafe for students. Consequently, the Superintendent must decide if conditions warrant a change in the normal schedule.

## When is the Decision Made?

Under normal circumstances, the process of gathering relevant information begins at approximately 4:00 a.m. Every effort is made to make decisions regarding delays and cancellations by 5:30 a.m. When extreme weather conditions are forecast and are not likely to change, the decision may be made the preceding evening to give parents additional time to make necessary arrangements for their children.

## Who Provides Relevant Information?

- District's Grounds Crew Supervisor and Transportation Coordinator
- Local and National Weather Service
- Township personnel, when appropriate
- School personnel in surrounding school districts, when appropriate

## What are the Primary Reasons for a Delay or Cancellation?

- Road conditions that are too dangerous for the school buses to travel.
- Extreme cold temperatures that could be unsafe for students.

## What are the Guidelines Regarding Extreme Cold?

- If the National Weather Service has issued a *Wind Chill Advisory* and wind chill predictions are for temperatures of -20° or colder at 6:30 a.m., a delay **may** be called.
- Note that there may be warmer or cooler areas within the District. The -20°F wind chill measure is a threshold at which point a delay **may be considered**. The District relies on the **available** temperature reports which may not reflect the conditions at your location.
- If the National Weather service issues a *Wind Chill Warning*, a delay **may** be called. If conditions do not improve, school **may** be cancelled.

## What is the Critical Question Regarding the Safety of the Roads?

The critical question is: Can school buses traveling at safe speeds get students to school safely and reasonably "on time?" The question is not: Is it snowing or are some roads slippery? That answer could be yes, but that does not always mean that buses cannot travel safely.

- If the conditions are drivable at 5:30 a.m. when the bus drivers arrive to start bus preparations and there is not an impending forecast of heavy snow corroborated with weather radar, transportation operations will begin.
- School may be delayed or cancelled if road conditions are such that travel is too hazardous for vehicles.
- Virtual Instruction Days may be considered if travel delays are expected to be so great that staff cannot reach the buildings in order to teach students or students will be out at bus stops for an excessive amount of time.

**Note:** If an unexpected squall or lake effect snow band arises *during bus runs*, it is not possible to cancel or delay bus runs in progress. In this instance, the buses will travel slowly or stop temporarily until conditions improve.

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## **Why Millcreek Township School District delays and cancellations should not be Compared with Other School Districts:**

Other Districts in our area may have unique climatological areas different from MTSD. Additionally, the vast majority of MTSD students are bus or car riders where other Districts may have many more walkers, creating a greater safety issue for extreme temperatures that would not apply in our district.

## **How Does the School District Communicate Delay or Cancellation?**

Each time a decision to delay or cancel school is made, the district uses a rapid phone notification system, which will call, text, and email our families to notify families of a delay or cancellation. Additionally, local media will be notified. Please obtain information from these sources.

## **Aren't the Buses Cold in the Morning During Extreme Weather?**

No. When the temperatures are extreme, the transportation mechanics report to work as early as 3:30 a.m. to start the buses and warm them up to a safe operational temperature before departure.

## **What is the Recommendation for Winter Dress?**

Our school District is in a Snow Belt area. Frequent heavy snow and cold temperatures are normal during the winter season. Students should always wear an appropriate coat, hat, gloves, and boots during winter weather.

## **What about an Unscheduled Early Dismissal?**

In the rare event of an early dismissal, high school students will be sent home first, followed by middle and then elementary students. The travel time between transportation runs must be maintained and this also is designed to help parents/ guardians in their planning so that an adult or older child may be in the home before the elementary child arrives.

## **What Decision Should Parents Make?**

Parents always have the responsibility for making decisions that are in the best interest of the health and safety of their own children. This includes decisions about sending a child to school when conditions are questionable. The Superintendent will make a decision in the best interest of the District at large. Parents may decide to make a different decision for their own child based upon other factors such as age, health, attendance, academics, distance from the bus stop, road conditions unique to their area, bus stop waiting area, length of the bus ride, etc. In those situations, the School District will honor the decision of the parent who assesses the individual circumstance and acts accordingly. While it is important to have students in school, on time, every scheduled day, the safety of each child is paramount. As the District makes every effort to preserve instructional time for its students, parents are urged to make the appropriate decision based on their own situation to preserve their child's health, safety, and welfare.