



Pine Brook School

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Dear Families,

We have been lucky regarding weather conditions thus far; however, in the event schools are to be closed or the day is abbreviated due to inclement weather, be aware of the following for your convenience:

District Website: www.mersnj.us

Television Stations: NEWS 12 NEW JERSEY, Channels 4, 5 & 7

School Messenger: Parents will be notified about school closings through our District's Automated System. Messages will be left for all parents on their home and cell phones. Please ensure that your contact information is up-to-date within Genesis.

In the event of a school closing, early dismissal, delayed opening or emergency, you will receive a phone call from the district. Please do not contact the school directly, as our phone lines will need to be used for emergency purposes. On rare occasions children will be bused home early to avoid hazardous traffic conditions, unexpected storms, or for other unexpected emergencies. All parents will be contacted through the District's Automated System in these situations. If you are aware of such conditions and have not received a call, please reference one of the options above. Please remember that road conditions and visibility are the major factors in the decision making, more so than the number of inches of snow. Therefore, you should check a closing "site" at the slightest sign of snow or freezing weather. **Please note: When school has a delayed opening, we begin at 10:15am.**

It is important that you have an emergency plan developed with your child in the instance of an early school closing. Please also make sure that your child is familiar with your procedures for days with an early closing.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ACTIVITIES DURING AN EARLY CLOSURE OR DELAYED OPENING?

Before School Activities:

- In the event of a *delayed opening*, ALL before school activities are CANCELED. Students will not be permitted into the building until 10:15 on delayed opening days.

After School Activities:

- In the event of an early closure, ALL after school activities are CANCELED.

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPROPRIATE DRESS/BEHAVIOR DURING WINTER WEATHER:

- Wear the proper footwear that provides traction on snow and ice. Footwear should be made of anti-slip material; avoid plastic and leather-soled shoes or boots. (See specific note about Crocs below.)
- Exercise caution when entering and exiting vehicles, and use the vehicle/handrails for balance and support.

- Try to walk only in designated areas that are safe for foot traffic. If you notice that a walkway is covered in ice, walk on the grass next to it, which will have more traction.
- Take small steps to maintain your center of balance, walk slowly and never run. When possible, walk with your hands free to maintain your balance. And despite the cold temperatures, avoid putting your hands in your pockets. This will help you better maintain your balance and allow you to break a fall should you slip.
- Look ahead to the path in front of you to avoid hazards, and test a potentially slippery area before stepping on it by tapping your foot on the surface first.
- Dry your shoes or boots on floor mats when entering the building.
- Specific notice about Crocs: While Crocs are a popular and comfortable choice for children due to their lightweight and slip-on design, they may pose certain risks, especially in active or high-traffic settings like schools and playgrounds or during winter or wet weather. Here are some key concerns:
 - **Tripping Hazards:** Crocs can easily slip off or become unstable during running, jumping, or climbing, which increases the risk of trips, falls, and subsequent injuries.
 - **Lack of Support:** Crocs generally lack proper arch and ankle support, which can lead to foot pain or strain, particularly during extended wear or physical activities.
 - **Not Suitable for Sports:** These shoes are not designed for running or sports activities, making them unsafe for participation in gym classes or recess games.

To help ensure the safety and well-being of all students, we kindly encourage parents to ensure that children wear properly fitted, closed-toe shoes with good support, particularly during school hours, physical education, and outdoor activities. We understand that Crocs may still have their place as casual footwear; however, they are not always appropriate for more active or structured environments or during winter or wet weather events. We appreciate your cooperation in helping to keep our students safe.

We thank you in advance for your support and hope to have snow-free months ahead!

Thank you,
Julie Szustowicz
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