



Guidelines for School Delays and Closings Due to Inclement Weather

Beliefs

- Weather conditions are both variable and extreme in the Michiana Area.
- Concrete rules do not exist for making decisions regarding variable and extreme weather, but these guidelines will serve as a reference for Elkhart Community Schools (ECS).
- ECS believes the public expects schools to be open and to provide education, supervision, and other services (including meals) to its students.
- ECS 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.
- ECS recognizes that it's first and foremost a parental decision to determine if a child should attend school on inclement weather days.
- ECS 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 as soon as possible to ensure we are making the safest decision for students and staff. If conditions worsen following a delay, a school closing will be announced promptly.
- 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 Facebook page, [Elkhart Community Schools](#), and checking the [ECS website](#) is other immediate means of communication for delays and/or cancellations.
- Additional media outlets are also contacted:
 - [WNDU](#)
 - [WSBT](#)
 - [ABC57](#)

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](#))

Temperature prediction is increasingly accurate. ECS uses the hourly temperature predictions for its zip code from the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#). In addition, ECS 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 with calm wind (the starting point for severe wind chill concerns) at 5:30 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 7:00 a.m. with calm wind the school will consider closing. Such a determination will be made as early as possible, including the evening before.

Extreme Wind Chill ([See Chart](#))

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 Elkhart Municipal Airport, 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 -18 degrees or below and if local wind conditions are predicted to mirror the Elkhart Municipal Airport at 5:30 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 -18 degrees or below and local conditions mirror the airport wind conditions at 7:00 a.m., the school will consider closing. The variability of wind speed will likely cause this decision to be made in the morning.

Extreme Heat ([See Chart](#))

The ECS Athletic Department utilizes the [IHSAA](#) extreme heat guidance for outdoor competitions and practices. If the heat index is 90 or more, EHS Elementary School students will remain indoors for recess.



National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart



Temperature (°F)

Wind (mph)

Calm	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
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

Indiana High School Athletic Association HEAT INDEX INFORMATION & CHART

The [heat index \(HI\)](#) is an apparent temperature felt by the human body due to the combined effects of temperature and humidity. Most people understand that as the air temperature goes up, so does the heat index. But why does humidity play a role? It's because the body's perspiration cannot evaporate as well when the humidity increases. Therefore, the cooling effects of your sweat are reduced as the humidity rises, and your body is unable to cool itself naturally. Combine high heat and high humidity and you've got trouble!

Although it is convenient to use a single number (the heat index) to describe the apparent temperature your body feels, keep in mind that heat and humidity affect every body (and everybody) differently. Several assumptions are used to calculate the heat index. The heat index assumes that the body is:

- 5' 7" tall.
- 147 pounds.
- At 98.6°.
- Clothed in long trousers and a short-sleeved shirt.
- In shade.
- Walking at a speed of 3.1 mph.
- In a breeze of 6 mph.
- Not dripping with sweat.

If any of these factors change, e.g., more exertion, more clothing, and/or more weight, the heat index will change for that individual. For example, if you weigh 250 pounds, are wearing long-sleeved work clothes, and are working outside in the sun, the heat index value you hear reported on the radio is lower than what you are personally feeling.

The rules for minimizing the heat effects are simple:

- Monitor forecasts and advisories for periods of high heat indices.
- Take frequent breaks in the shade.
- Avoid prolonged exertion.
- Drink water often - and drink more than you think you need.

HEAT INDEX CHART



Relative Humidity

Temp.	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
82	81	82	83	84	84	85	86	88	89	90	91	93	95
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
86	85	87	88	89	91	93	95	97	100	102	105	108	112
88	88	89	91	93	95	98	100	103	106	110	113	117	121
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
92	94	96	99	101	105	108	112	116	121	126	131	137	143
94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135	137	148	155
96	101	104	108	112	116	121	126	132	135	141	146	160	168
98	105	109	113	117	123	128	134	138	144	150	157	172	181
100	109	114	118	124	129	136	141	147	154	161	168	185	195
102	114	119	124	130	137	143	149	156	164	172	180	199	210
104	119	124	131	137	144	151	158	166	175	184	193	214	226
106	124	130	137	145	153	162	172	182	193	204	216	229	243
108	130	137	144	153	162	172	182	193	205	218	231	245	260
110	136	143	150	161	171	182	194	206	219	233	247	262	278

Category	Heat Index	Possible Heat Disorders for People in High Risk Groups
Caution	80-90	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Extreme Caution	91-105	Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Danger	106-129	Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion likely. Heatstroke possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Extreme Danger	130 or higher	Heat stroke or sunstroke likely.