



## School Closing Protocol

*updated November 6, 2023*

Regular attendance is important to a student's ongoing success in school and we expect that, when school is in session, students will be actively engaged in learning. However, because we live in Michigan, and our winter weather is sometimes unpredictable, Grand Ledge Public Schools has established the following guidelines for decisions related to inclement weather. You may refer to these guidelines when you have questions about possible school closings/delays.

The decision to close or delay school due to inclement weather is a very difficult and serious undertaking. Decisions to close school for any reason are made in a thoughtful and deliberative process and, specifically, these decisions are made in response to the safety of students and staff members.

If the weather predictions are severe, we attempt to announce a school closing the night before. However, more likely a school closing decision won't be made until the middle of the night - usually no later than 5:30 a.m.

Factors taken into consideration when deciding whether to close/delay schools include:

- Information from the National Weather Service (NOAA)
- Amount and type of projected precipitation
- Local weather forecasts, including start and stop times
- Ability to clear parking lots and sidewalks around school buildings
- Street (highway, residential, and rural roads) and bus stop conditions
- Freezing rain and the effect on roads, power lines, and tree limbs
- Wind and wind chill; along with overall temperature
- Bus capability to start/run due to extreme cold or unplowed streets
- Driving conditions; are they hazardous for buses, students, staff
- Poor visibility due to fog or blowing snow
- Water, power, or phone outages within the district

Leaders in the Grand Ledge Public Schools administrative team closely monitor national, state, and local weather forecasts. At all times, the safety of our students and staff is the foundation for this team's conversations and decisions. The district's administrators are routinely out driving the roads beginning as early as 3:00 a.m. to assess road conditions within the Grand Ledge Public Schools community. It is important to remember our school district covers almost 120 square miles, and many of these are rural areas.

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The administrative team also maintains regular communication with neighboring districts. Area superintendents remain in close contact beginning with the first prediction of inclement weather, often having conversations the day before and again in the middle of the night when foul weather seems certain. While there is an effort to keep decisions consistent across the region, each district must weigh many factors unique to their district. Therefore, there may be times when Grand Ledge Public Schools is closed while another district remains open (and vice versa). Finally, decisions concerning the cancellation of athletic or other extra-curricular events will be made with input from the appropriate school administrators and directors.

### **Early Dismissal**

Grand Ledge Public Schools will generally not close once school is in session due to supervision concerns. Specifically, the district would not want to endanger a student by transporting a student by bus to his/her home, in the middle of a snowstorm, when there is no guarantee a caregiver received notification of the early dismissal and/or that a caregiver or other adult is home to let that child in out of the cold.

However, on an extremely rare occasion, it may be necessary to close a school during the day due to loss of power, loss of water, or other non-weather emergency situations. Families are reminded to provide the school office with up-to-date emergency telephone numbers to ensure our ability to notify them if this should be necessary.

### **Communication**

An automated phone call to all Grand Ledge students and staff is typically the preferred method of communication, and we do this using our SchoolMessenger system. If we have an SMS text phone number for you on file and you desire to receive SMS text messages from your child's school – including but not limited to, notifications about school closings – please text "yes" to 67587; you will then get text messages generated by our SchoolMessenger system. Notification of school closings because of inclement weather will also be posted on the district's website.

School closing, school delays, and early release decisions are not easy. Your child's education is important, and we want to provide learning opportunities on as many days as possible. Almost always, some people will agree with the decision that is made, and others will not.

Please know these decisions are not made lightly. Rather, the decision to close school, for any reason, is made through a thoughtful and deliberative process. And, most importantly, these decisions are made with concern for the safety of students and staff.