

PARENT BULLETIN REGARDING SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Please read the following information carefully, as it outlines routines to be followed when school is started late, canceled, or dismissed early. All of us are concerned with the safety of your children, and following these procedures will enable us to take better care of them in case of an emergency. Although this bulletin is primarily concerned with inclement weather, these same procedures would be applicable to other emergency situations. More information can be found on our website.

Who makes the school closing decision? We carefully monitor the weather and the decision to close school is made by the Superintendent and Bluff Country School Bus.

What factors determine if school will be delayed, released early, or closed? We review many factors including: current weather, road conditions, forecasts, plowing status, bus driver availability, and our ability to safely transport students.

How is the school closing decision made? We communicate with Bluff Country School Bus, other school districts, law enforcement, township, county and state road maintenance personnel. Based on the input provided and the factors involved, we use our best judgment to determine if we can safely transport students.

When is the school closing decision made? We try to make the decision by 5:30 AM and have it communicated out by 6:00 AM. If conditions warrant a decision to be made the night prior, we try to make the decision by 9:30 PM and have it communicated out by 10:00 PM. If conditions warrant an early dismissal, ideally we would make the decision by noon or at least one hour prior to dismissing early, to allow time for bus drivers to be prepared and for families to have time to make alternative plans.

How will I know if school is closed? We will use a variety of direct district communication to share the announcement in a timely manner. Specifically we will use:

- Text messages, voicemails, and emails through JMC. *Please be sure to login to your JMC account to make sure your information is up to date and accurate.*
- PEM District Facebook page
- PEM District Twitter account
- PEM Website
- KTTC, KROC 106.9, Y-105, Quick Country 96.5, Z-Rock 107.7, 103.9 The DOC

What if I feel it is too dangerous to send my child to school? If you feel the weather is too dangerous to send your children to school, you have the right to keep your children home. If you feel you don't want your child to drive due to their inexperience with winter driving conditions, then they should ride the bus. If your child will be absent, follow normal attendance reporting procedures for your child's school.

What if school dismissed early, but I don't feel safe having my child drive home? If we dismiss school early and you don't want your student driving home, you may call the school and have them ride the bus or stay at school until you pick them up.

What about after school activities if school closes? All after school activities are CANCELED if school is closed. This includes Community Education Classes, student groups, fine arts, and athletic practices, events, and performances.

What should I do to prepare for school closing?

- **Have an alternative plan ready.** If school starts late, is closed or dismissed early—have a plan in place for your child to be cared for. Where will they go, who will watch them, how will they get inside, does your child know the plan?
- **Send children to school dressed properly for the winter conditions.** If a bus has mechanical problems, slips off the road, or is involved in an accident there is a possibility that heat may be lost on the bus. Having proper clothing could make a big difference. Please talk with your students about dressing properly, especially JR/SR High School students who feel flip flops and shorts are “cool” in the winter or may be riding buses late coming home from sporting events. Even if they don't wear the jacket, hat, or gloves just having those along if needed could be critical if heat is lost on the bus.
- **Please make a plan with your child about what to do if the bus is delayed or doesn't show up at the bus stop.** This situation could arise due to a bus that gets stuck in a driveway, has mechanical problems, or because your student is a few minutes late getting to the bus stop. In some cases we may need to send another bus. We need your cooperation and communication as well, so if a bus doesn't show up and is more than 15 minutes late; you may contact the bus garage **507-710-4220**. Please remember that a bus may be 5-10 late simply due to the changes in who happens to ride on that particular day or road conditions.

Procedure followed if there is a 2 hour late start:

We try to make the decision by 5:30 AM to allow time for bus drivers to be prepared and for families to have time to make alternative plans.

- Text, voicemail, and email message is sent out through our JMC System
- Message is posted on PEM district webpage and social media
- Any late start will be a 2 hour late start
- All morning Preschool classes are **canceled**
- PM Preschool will run on time
- KIDZ CLUB will remain open.

Procedure followed if there is no school:

We try to make the decision by 5:30 AM to allow time for bus drivers to be prepared and for families to have time to make alternative plans.

- Text, voicemail, and email message is sent out through our JMC System
- Message is posted on PEM district webpage and social media
- All pre-school, community education activities, and school activities/athletics are canceled
- KIDZ CLUB will remain open, if it is safe for staff to report to work

Procedure followed if school is dismissed early:

If weather, road conditions, or other conditions create the necessity for dismissing school early, we try to make the decision at least one hour prior to dismissing early, to allow time for bus drivers to be prepared and for families to have time to make alternative plans. The official announcement will be sent out in the same manner as a school closing or late start.

- All Preschool, community education activities, and school activities/athletics are canceled when school is **dismissed early**
- KIDZ CLUB will remain open until 6:00pm.
- Please keep the bus lane clear when you pick up your children.
- If you don't want your student driving home, you may call the school and have them ride the bus or stay at school until you pick them up.