



Rockford Area Schools Inclement Weather (and other emergencies) Plan and School Closing Procedures

Emergency Closing Decisions--

Decisions regarding emergency closings will utilize as much information as possible. The opinions of transportation officials, snow removal authorities and law enforcement officers will be solicited each time to help us truly assess the respective situation. Once the conditions and forecasts have been evaluated and opinions reviewed, the Superintendent will make the decision to keep schools open or implement one of the three closing or delayed start procedures.

- I. **School Closed**--First, school may be canceled for an entire day (or more). In the event this decision must be made, a message will be posted on the district web site at www.rockford.k12.mn.us and provided to the media. It will also be communicated to administrators, staff and parents as soon as possible by our phone notification system through Infinite Campus. The closing decision will affect all areas of the district, including early childhood, Galaxy Kids, community education and the community center.

- II. **Late Start**--Secondly, the opening of school may be delayed when it appears that conditions are improving rapidly and that such a delay will allow safe travel or will permit a more informed final conclusion regarding a complete closing. It may be possible that a complete closing will occur even when a "delay" announcement has initially been given. This decision may require more information but it will be made as soon as possible. It will be important for parents to anticipate further phone messages in the case of an initial call for a delay. School will dismiss at the regular time for each school when a delayed start plan has been used in the morning.

When a delayed start has been determined, the additional procedures to be implemented are as follows:

- Galaxy Kids program will open at the regular time. If the decision is made to close school at a later time, Galaxy will remain open depending on the severity of the weather. If the decision is made to close the Galaxy kids program at any time, parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
- Morning preschool, ECFE and ECSE will be canceled. All day preschool will follow the delayed start schedule. Afternoon preschool will be held as usual.
- Field trips scheduled for the day will be canceled.
- Students in special education or magnet programs from other districts attending school in Rockford shall be informed of closings or delayed starts.
- Students in out-of-district special education placements shall follow the procedures for Rockford students in all other situations. Families of these students will need to watch the local news or check the district website for notification.
- Students in vocational school programs will not attend morning sessions.
- All morning Community Education activities and programs will be cancelled.

III. **Early Release**—Finally, a developing storm could necessitate a school closing before the normal dismissal times in order to assure safe travel. This is the most challenging weather situation because parents are often away from home and the plan would only be considered if weather conditions are worsening rapidly. It is essential that no students be placed at greater risk because of the decision to dismiss early than would exist if they stayed in school until regular dismissal. We must follow the established procedures carefully to assure that elementary students go home only with sufficient notice to parents or the following of an established personal plan on file at the school. We will be calling all parents via the Infinite Campus automated system, but middle school and high school students will be released at the designated time without assurance of any parent availability. The additional procedures should be followed:

- The order of dismissal in an emergency will be the same as a regular dismissal.
- It is essential that elementary principal have emergency procedure plans from parents on file for each student. We do not intend to dismiss any student into a risky situation.
- Parents may pick up students as soon as an announcement to dismiss is made.
- Any student who normally walks to school should be dismissed as soon as the decision to close has been made. In the case of elementary students, parents will have been contacted.
- High school students who drive their own vehicles will be dismissed immediately after the decision has been made in order to have them home safely as soon as possible, as well as get them off roadways to be traveled by buses and parents. A student who normally does not ride with a high school driver should not be excused.
- When an early dismissal decision has been made early enough, afternoon preschool will be canceled; however, bus drivers and principals will need to assure that all children on the respective routes have received the notification so no preschool student is placed in a dangerous situation. This notification must be made by phone to each parent.
- All evening ECFE classes will be cancelled.
- Also if an early dismissal decision has been made and it is determined that it would be more timely and safer to bring morning preschool children home on the regular K-12 afternoon routes, the morning preschool children will be held at school and will be dropped off with the regular K-12 afternoon routes.
- Students in out-of-district special education placements will be returned to their homes or other regularly assigned drop-off location as soon as possible when closing early.
- Students at vocational school programs shall be returned to the high school as soon as possible to enable them to be on regular transportation or to drive home themselves.
- If road conditions prevent a timely return to connect with regular bus transportation, other arrangements will be made by school officials.
- If a student normally attends the Galaxy Kids program after school, parents are expected to make arrangements to pick up their child as soon as dismissal is announced. Galaxy Kids will remain open for two hours after announced dismissal time. Students who do not normally attend Galaxy Kids must be supervised by other school personnel and are not to be sent to Galaxy Kids.

- Students scheduled for field trips on days when weather is deteriorating should not be sent on the respective trips. In the event that students have been sent on field trips and an early dismissal becomes necessary, the students shall be returned to the school as soon as possible for transportation on regular bus routes. If the field trip buses do not reach school before the early dismissal buses leave, a new plan will be developed by the principal and Supervisor of Transportation.
- All afternoon and evening Community Education classes are cancelled.
- Rockford Community Center and activities will be cancelled.

If schools must close early, buses will follow regular return routes.

Please discuss with your child what to do in the event the school is dismissed early and no one is home when he/she arrives.

Activities--Co-curricular activities and evening community education activities scheduled on days when any of the three emergency closing decisions are necessary shall be handled as follows:

- **School is closed**-- All activities will be cancelled for the day. Practices will not be held unless superintendent authorization is granted for special circumstances.
- **School starting is delayed**--all activities will be held as scheduled.
- **School is dismissed early**--no activities will be held. Practices will not be held unless superintendent authorization is granted for special circumstances.

Family Notification Procedure—

School closings due to severe weather or other emergency reasons will be posted on the district website at www.rockford.k12.mn.us. A media message will be announced over TV stations, KARE 11 TV WCCO 4, KSTP 5 and KMSP 9, and also placed on KRWC 1360 radio.

Complementing the media messages is our family notification system through Infinite Campus. This calling system is very effective, but your help is needed to maintain accurate numbers. Parents and staff are asked to update home and business phone numbers, as well as email addresses, in the system in order to assure that the notification system functions at its most efficient level to reach you wherever you are. We may use this system to deliver more than one message during a given storm as circumstances dictate.

Please remember that the Infinite Campus parent notification system will call work phone numbers, but cannot recognize extensions. Working parents should talk with receptionists at their office about the district's notification system. Whenever possible, direct dial numbers or cell phone numbers should be used instead of switchboard or receptionist numbers.

The school district may conclude that students can be safely transported to and from school and keep school open, but an individual parent may disagree with our decision. Under such conditions, parents must exercise their judgment regarding the attendance of their child(ren). We will respect all reasonable decisions in these circumstances and excuse any absence.