

Decisions made regarding weather are always difficult when determining delays, eLearning or closings, but these guidelines will serve as a reference for the School Town of Munster. School Town of Munster (STM) believes the public expects schools to be open and to provide education, supervision and other services to its students. STM believes all parents are committed to keeping children safe and that parents will dress their children appropriately for the weather when sending the children to school. STM recognizes that it's first and foremost a parental decision to determine if a child should attend school on inclement weather days.

STM respects a parent's decision to keep their child at home during inclement weather. Parents are expected to contact the school's attendance office to call their child off of school. The student will be counted as absent, per State code, and the student will be given an opportunity to complete their academic work in the same manner as an excused absence from school.

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind parents and students about how the STM communicates weather-related announcements, including closings, delays and early dismissals.

COMMUNICATION

Announcements will be sent no later than 6:30 a.m. if we are delaying, eLearning or closing. Following a delay, it will be announced no later than 8:30 a.m. if we will shift to eLearning or closing for the day.

If eLearning is the chosen format during an inclement weather day, students are expected to login to their appropriate virtual classroom platform at the regular school start time and remain actively engaged for the entire school day to be marked present. Specific procedures will be shared by each individual teacher.

Once the decision is made to change the school district's regular operating schedule, that information will be communicated through a variety of ways:

- The District website – www.munster.us;
- The District Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/SchoolTownofMunster>;
- To parents and faculty/staff via SchoolMessenger, which delivers messages to the email addresses and cell phone numbers according to each user's individual preferences in PowerSchool; and
- The WGN Radio Emergency Closing Center Network - www.emergencyclosingcenter.com.

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, when compared to predicted snowfall, the decision regarding school status is delayed until the snow accumulation indicates a need for action. Such a decision, except in extreme situations, 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 BELOW)

Temperature prediction is increasingly accurate. STM uses the hourly temperature predictions for its zip code from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (www.noaa.gov). In addition, STM 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 7:00 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 9:00 a.m. with calm wind the school will consider an eLearning day or closing. Such a determination will be made as early as possible, including the evening before.

EXTREME WIND CHILL (SEE CHART BELOW)

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 Lansing Municipal Airport, these conditions can vary from actual weather in Munster. Local observations of wind speed will affect the decision regarding delaying or closing school.

Using the Wind Chill Chart, severe wind chill concerns or frostbite emerge at a predicted wind chill temperature at or near -20 degrees for 30 minutes.

If wind chill is predicted by NOAA to be at or near -20 degrees or below and if local wind conditions are predicted to mirror the airport wind conditions at 7:00 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 -20 degrees or below and local conditions mirror the airport wind conditions at 9:00 a.m., the school will consider eLearning or closing. The variability of wind speed will likely cause this decision to be made in the morning.



Wind Chill Chart

