



Winter weather is upon us and we want to share some information on weather-related school closings from the Washington Township Schools (WCHS 308, D50, D51 & D52) so that you may be prepared for the days ahead. Student safety is always our first consideration when it comes to cancelling school or events. Typically, three physical factors impact the decision to close schools. Road conditions, temperature, and visibility are all considered when determining whether or not conditions are safe enough to have school.

Snow Days

Snow events are the most common days for school closings. Factors that are considered when deciding on whether or not to cancel school:

- Accumulation and drifting
- Icing
- Wind speeds (particularly for the country)
- Temperature
- Road conditions
- Forecast Estimates for continued precipitation

When these conditions are impacted we will consult with a number of different people: Each township superintendent drives roads within their individual districts to personally inspect conditions; Township Road Commissioners, Area Superintendents, and our Transportation Directors are contacted to discuss current conditions. There is no single rule of thumb for accumulation amounts and much of the decision depends on the presence of blowing and/or drifting snow especially on our more rural roads. Every effort will be made to make a decision and inform families as quickly as possible but a decision to cancel school and/or events will not be made solely on a forecast.

Temperature-Related Cancellations

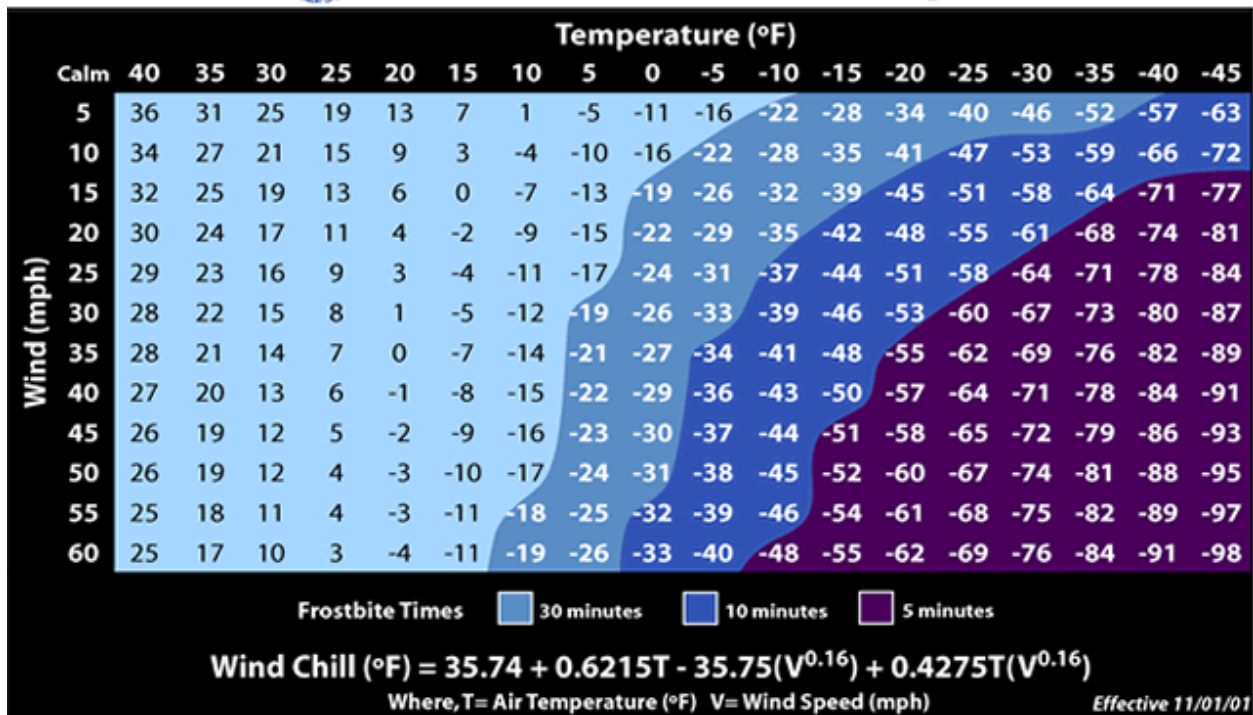
Extreme temperatures are often a part of our winters. Extreme temperatures impact people as well as our buses. Factors considered when making temperature-related cancellation decisions include:

- Temperature
- Wind
- Duration and Timing of Cold Temps
- Road Conditions
- Safe Operation of Buses

Our key source of data is the NOAA Wind Chill Chart



Wind Chill Chart



When inside the 30-minute exposure area of the graph, attendance is questionable and dependent upon road conditions. When wind chills are likely to be to the right of that area, it is unlikely that we would attend.

Late Starts

Late starts have often come up as a possibility for avoiding snow days. We recognize the level of impact that snow days have on families to find childcare and safe coverage for children. Late starts may be an option only if there is a level of certainty that conditions will improve throughout the day and we are not placing an additional burden on our families. If we enact a late start, we will typically communicate this decision the night prior to the late start.

Before/After School Events

As a rule of thumb, if school is cancelled, all events and practices are cancelled. There are occasions where this change would involve extra-curricular tournament play at the middle or high school level if weather and/or road conditions improve throughout the day. Those situations will be communicated directly should they arise and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Again, most of the time all events will be cancelled if a snow day occurs.

Parent Responsibility

Student safety is always our first priority, and we ask for your assistance by dressing students appropriately for current conditions. Please send your children to school with a coat, hat, and gloves. This is critical in below zero weather. If you are in need of any of these items, please ask your respective school for assistance.

Also, if your child is driving, it is a great idea to equip the vehicle with an emergency kit just in case. IDOT suggests always carrying jumper cables, flares or reflectors, windshield washer fluid, an ice scraper, traction material, blankets, non-perishable food, and a first aid kit.

It is possible that on a snow day your child may have been assigned work to complete. Through the use of technology and advanced planning, many of our teachers will plan for the possibility of snow days by providing assignments or extra work should the snow day occur.

Finally, making a decision about having a snow day is a difficult one. We will use our best judgment and appreciate your support as we work to ensure student learning and student safety.

Notifications

We will always try to have a call that goes out by 6:00 am for snow days. The automated system can take about 20 minutes to complete all calls depending on the number of schools closing at the same time. We will put information out on our twitter, Facebook, and website immediately for instant notification.

Thank you,

Dr. Kyle Freeman, WCHS 308 Superintendent

Dr. Chad Allaman, D50 Superintendent

Mr. Dale Heidbreder, D51 Superintendent

Mr. Pat Minasian, D52 Superintendent