Girard School District

Guidelines for School Delays and Cancellations

The Girard School District’s first priority is the safety of our students and personnel. We encourage you to have a plan in place for school delays, cancellation, and emergency dismissal situations.

Many factors go into the decision to close or delay the opening of the school. It is important for you to know the process.

Who Decides?
The Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Donna Miller, is required by law to ensure that the schools are open on all scheduled days unless conditions are unsafe for students. Consequently, Mrs. Miller must decide if conditions warrant a change in the normal schedule.

When is the Decision Made?
When extreme weather conditions are forecast, the decision is often made the preceding evening in order to give parents additional time to make necessary arrangements for their children. As we live in an area that can historically have rapidly changing weather, making a decision the evening before is not always possible. Under normal circumstances, the process of gathering relevant information begins at approximately 3:00 a.m. Every effort is made to make decisions regarding delays and cancellations by 5:30 a.m.

Who Provides Relevant Information?
- Local and National Weather Service.
- Communication from Erie County Department of Public Safety – Emergency Management Coordinator.
- Lake City, Girard Township and Girard Borough personnel, when appropriate.
- School personnel in surrounding school districts, when appropriate.

What are the Primary Reasons for a Delay or Cancellation?
- Extreme cold temperatures that could be unsafe for students.
- Road conditions that are too dangerous for the school buses to travel.

What are the Guidelines Regarding Extreme Cold?
- According to the National Weather Service, no specific rules exist for determining when wind chill becomes dangerous. However, the threshold for potentially dangerous wind chill conditions is about -20°F.
• If the National Weather Service has issued a *Wind Chill Advisory* and wind chill predictions are for temperatures of -20°F or colder at 5:30 a.m., a delay may be called. Note that there may be warmer or cooler areas within the District. The -20°F wind chill guideline is a threshold at which point a delay will be considered. The District relies on the available temperature reports which may not reflect the conditions at your location.
• If the National Weather service issues a *Wind Chill Warning*, a delay will be called.

School cancellation is possible.

**What is the Critical Question Regarding the Safety of the Roads?**
The critical question is: Can school buses traveling at safe speeds for the road conditions get students to school safely and reasonably “on time?” The question is not: Is it snowing or are some roads slippery? That answer could be yes, but that does not always mean that buses cannot travel safely.

**Note:** If an unexpected squall or lake effect snow band arises once transportation of students begins, it is usually not possible to cancel or delay bus runs in progress. Rapid changes in weather conditions are not uncommon due to the Girard School District’s close proximity to Lake Erie. If this situation occurs, the buses will travel slowly or even stop temporarily until the weather conditions improve.

**Delays**
Students should arrive at school two hours later than the usual school entrance time. Please do not bring students to school early when the District is operating on a two hour delay. Faculty and staff may also be delayed arriving at schools.

**School Closure**
All before, during, and after school events will be cancelled.

**How Does the School District Communicate the Delay or Cancellation?**
Each time a decision to delay or cancel school is made, the following TV stations are notified: WSEE, WJET, WICU. Additionally, the District utilizes a mass notification system, which will call a home, cell phones, text, and / or email (depending on how a parent has set-up their Infinite Campus account) in order to notify families of a delay or cancellation. Please obtain information from these sources.

**What about an Unscheduled Early Dismissal?**
In the event of a rare early dismissal, high school and middle school students will be sent home first, followed by elementary students. This is designed to help parents/guardians in their planning so that an adult or older child may be in the home before the elementary child arrives home.

**What Decision Should Parents Make?**
The Superintendent will make a decision based the best interest of the District at large and the safety of our students and employees. Parents always have the responsibility for making decisions that are in the best interest of the health and safety of their own children.
Parents may use their discretion in deciding to keep their child at home due to their child's individual circumstances, including factors such as age, health, road conditions unique to their area, bus stop waiting area, length of the bus ride, etc. In those situations, the School District will honor the decision of the parent who assesses the individual circumstance and acts accordingly. Parents may also choose to transport their child to school.

What is the Recommendation for Winter Dress?
Frequent heavy snow and cold temperatures are normal during the winter season. Students should always wear an appropriate coat, hat, gloves, and boots during winter weather.