



# Guidelines for School Delays and Closings Due to Inclement Weather

## Beliefs

- Weather conditions are both variable and extreme in Northern Indiana.
- Concrete rules do not exist for making decisions regarding variable and extreme weather, but these guidelines will serve as a reference for the Caston School Corporation.
- Caston School Corporation believes the public expects schools to be open and to provide education, supervision, and other services (including meals) to its students whenever possible.

## Communication

- On a normal school day, it will be announced no later than 6:30 a.m. if we are delaying and/or closing unless extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the school administration exist.
- Following a delay, it will be announced no later than 8:30 a.m. if we are closing rather than delaying.
- Following the district's Twitter account, @CastonSchools, or Caston School Corporation's Facebook page, or checking the school webpage at [www.caston.k12.in.us](http://www.caston.k12.in.us) is the most immediate means of communication for delays and/or cancellations, as these are the first posts that take place prior to media posts.
- Automated phone messages through SchoolReach are sent within 15 minutes of a delay and/or cancellation decision to all contacts that are provided to the district. To be added to the district's calling list notify a school office or send an email to: [williamsd@caston.k12.in.us](mailto:williamsd@caston.k12.in.us).
- Additional media outlets are also contacted:
  - **Cass County Info.**
  - **Hoosier 103.7/WSAL/WLHM 102.3**
  - **WROI 92.1 – Rochester**
  - **ABC 57 News**
  - **Channel 13 News – Indianapolis**
  - **WNDU TV Channel 16**
  - **WSBT TV Channel 22**
  - **WISH TV Channel 8**
  - **WLFJ TV Channel 18**

# Delaying or Closing School is Based on Multiple Variables

## Fog:

- The most unpredictable weather variable is fog. Fog conditions can change dramatically in a matter of minutes, and can vary greatly from one part of the district to another making this one of the most difficult weather-related decisions that must be made. Fog delays are always made in the mornings and typically the decision is delayed as late as possible to monitor the conditions. It is always possible that fog conditions will diminish and/or progressively worsen after busses have already begun routes.
- Parents are encouraged to closely monitor fog conditions and consider the safety of their own children based upon their specific situation with boarding the school bus. In some instances, parents may choose not to have their child board the bus. In this case, if the parent were unable to transport the child to school the school would count the child absent; however would consider the absence excused and the child would be provided with all necessary school work to make up missed assignments.

## Freezing Rain/Sleet:

- Freezing rain/sleet is temperature sensitive and fast-occurring. It begins and ends with little notice. When freezing rain/sleet is predicted, the decision regarding school is delayed until the latest possible time in an effort to observe the most current 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 roads will be passable by the following morning.
- It is important to remember that there is a big difference between a typical family vehicle and a 70+-passenger school bus when it comes to roads piled high with snow. Getting busses around corners, maneuvered at turnaround points, and into some of the areas of the district that pose a challenge must always be taken into consideration when making decisions about school delays and cancellations.

## Extreme Cold (See Chart Below):

- Temperature prediction is increasingly accurate. Caston uses the hourly temperature predictions for its zip code (46931) from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (noaa.gov). In addition, Caston 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 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 most accurate conditions possible in Indiana, these conditions can vary from the actual weather in Fulton/Cass county areas located in our school district. 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 those 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 by NOAA to remain at or near -20 degrees or below and local conditions continue to mirror those conditions beyond 9:00 a.m., the school will consider closing for the day. The variability of wind speed will likely cause this decision to be made in the morning.

