

Severe and Hazardous Weather Bulletin

I. General

The purpose of this bulletin is to establish and communicate the policies and procedures for this school district relating to safety of students during periods of severe and hazardous weather.

II. School District Policy

It is the policy of this school district to follow procedures, which provide maximum protection and safety of students in the event of potentially dangerous or hazardous weather conditions. Existing conditions at a given time will dictate action to be taken by school authorities.

III. Definitions

To clarify terms used, definitions are stated to guide intent and interpretation of this bulletin.

- A. TORNADO WATCH - Means weather conditions are such that a tornado could occur.
- B. TORNADO WARNING - Means a tornado has been sighted in the area.
- C. HAZARDOUS WEATHER - Means that weather and/or resulting road conditions are such that the safe operation of vehicles involves unnecessary risk.

IV. Operation Procedures

- A. When the school receives official information of a tornado watch during school hours, action by school authorities will depend on the extent of the forecast and time element involved.
 - 1. The situation may require action as follows:
 - a. Dismissal of students that walk to school with instructions to proceed immediately for their homes or other parentally designated places
 - b. Transportation of others as time permits
 - (1) An attempt to transport middle & high school students to their regular bus stop first
 - (2) Followed with transportation of elementary students approximately one hour late
 - 2. Generally, no children will be picked up by buses when a tornado watch is in effect
 - 3. Parents or designated representatives may pick up children at school if they so desire, but are requested to avoid school bus loading areas and bus traffic routes.
- B. When the school is officially notified of a tornado warning during school hours, it is expected that the time available will be insufficient to disperse students. If so, procedures will be placed in operation to provide the students with maximum protection offered at each school building.
- C. If hazardous weather conditions develop when schools are in operation, the superintendent of schools, or his designee, will decide on the matter of early dismissal of students. Such decision will be based on reports and information received by the transportation supervisor. Procedures for early dismissal in this situation are as follows:
 - 1. Middle and high school students will be dismissed first and appropriate bus route schedules will be placed in operation.
 - 2. The elementary students will be dismissed approximately one hour later depending on prevailing weather and road conditions.
- D. Hazardous conditions may develop requiring a decision by the superintendent of schools, or his designee, not to commence operation of schools on a particular day. Action will be based on reports and information received by the transportation supervisor and on consultation with the superintendent of schools.

V. Parental Information, Cooperation and Coordination

A. Radio and television stations will receive and broadcast information furnished by our school district regarding all actions necessary in the event of "severe or hazardous weather" situations. School personnel will contact media at appropriate times. School closing information will be available on most Grand Rapids radio TV stations. Information is also available on local TV station websites.

B. School personnel responsible will take necessary action to insure that appropriate procedures will be taken if serious situations arise; and parents will know in advance what types of action to expect.

1. Principals will issue implementing instructions regarding each school building for which they are responsible.
 2. If parents of transported students feel it is unsafe for them to ride the bus under situations in question, it is their prerogative to keep them home, and they will receive an excused absence for the period involved.
 3. During inclement weather, various roads may be unsafe for travel. Bus drivers, being familiar with the roads, may need to make decisions on alternate or abbreviated routes for the safety of students. Parents should plan an alternate place for their child(ren) to be dispatched from the bus.
 4. Drivers may decide it is necessary to return to a school with some students if conditions warrant such action.
5. Availability of open school telephone lines is essential during emergency situations. Please limit calls to schools in the interest of student safety.