



January 2024

## **School Closing Blizzards! Ice! Windchill!**

Thank you for understanding why we have decided to close school recently. The weather did not cooperate with us. Not only have we had to cancel school but also events.

Whenever we are faced with the decision of closing school, we look at many factors. We will always choose based on student safety.

We look at the current weather, the forecast, and check with other professionals who understand the weather. In addition, we have people out on the roads at around 4:30, checking them to ensure they are safe for travel. We have 440 square miles of school district, so it may be “safe” in the southern part of the district, but unsafe in the rest. In addition, we talk to school officials at nearby districts to determine what they are thinking, and how their contiguous roads are. In fact, we always communicate with our most proximate schools.

When the temperature hits an extremely negative windchill, we know that it is time to close school. How often does it get this cold? Not often. But when it gets this cold, we have the duty to do the right thing.

### **What happens on a day we close**

Whenever we close, we automatically cancel middle school-level games and practices. On most occasions when BOTH school districts are closed, we will not play a high school event. However, as the day goes on, we work with our opponent schools to determine whether to play a high school (JV/Varsity) event. We will always err on the side of caution.

We will ...

- ...always cancel MS games and practices on “snow days”
- ...make decisions on other events by 1 p.m. and notify families via Remind
- ...no matter what, make the best decision for our students, staff, and families

### **Further information on athletics (*It Can Be Complicated*)**

## **Inspiring excellence through perseverance, resilience, and individual success.**

Safety is always foremost in mind when decisions are being made. The Athletic Director gathers information and input from the National Weather Service office in Gaylord, the Kalkaska County Sheriff's Office, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the KPS Transportation Director, and KPS administrative colleagues.

As we all know, the weather in Northern Michigan can be quite variable, and factors such as timing of the weather event, duration, and if the conditions are expected to improve or degrade influence our decision making.

When the decision is made to close school on a day when there are no athletic events, it is our policy to cancel all sports practices, with the following exception: varsity teams may practice if..

- It is approved by administration, and
- It is in the afternoon/early evening, and
- It is voluntary and not required (deferring to parents' judgment whether it is safe/unsafe for their athlete to participate).

**Except in extenuating circumstances**, we do not make a decision on a snow day until the morning. We try to make a decision by 5:15 a.m. and send out a message via School Messenger by 5:30. This will include a phone call and a text message. Information will also be on local television and radio stations, as well. We make the decision and call sooner, if possible.

We will...

- ...send out the phone and text message
- ...place the call on several media outlets
- ...announce the message on Facebook

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school. We will keep your children's safety as our first concern, always.

Thank you!

**Supporting families to build successful  
students.**