

# **ARGENTA-OREANA CUSD #1**

## **SCHOOL CLOSING GUIDELINES**

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During periods of adverse weather conditions or emergency situations, the Argenta-Oreana Community Unit #1 has a plan. The safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority, thus, the District has a comprehensive plan that is executed every time there is consideration of a school closing due to weather conditions. We understand that our decisions affect families in various ways. With that in mind, we are providing the following information about the decision-making process.

### **HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?**

Please understand that in times of challenging weather conditions or emergency situations, we make the decision to open or close schools based on a careful consideration of multiple factors, such as the following:

1. Weather service information - The district consults with the National Weather Service and local news stations for updates and forecasts regarding temperature and weather conditions.
2. Outside temperature and wind chill
3. Amount of snow and ice accumulated
4. Whether snow/ice is continuing and how long the continuing precipitation is forecast.
5. Amount of snow drifting and visibility
6. Building conditions - Schools are checked to make sure electricity and heat are working properly.
7. Parking lot and sidewalk conditions – Administrators monitor and talk to maintenance and custodial staff members who are responsible for clearing sidewalks.
8. The condition of our bus fleet. Although all A-O buses are fitted with engine block heaters, extremely cold conditions can prevent buses from starting.
9. Power status at each school.
10. HVAC (heat and air conditioning) status at each school
11. Superintendent drives district roads (rural and in town)
12. Superintendent discusses road and weather conditions with local officials and road commissioners.
13. Discussions with other school district superintendents

### **WHO MAKES THE DECISION?**

The superintendent makes the final decision to keep schools open or close school during inclement weather. The decision is made based on the factors mentioned above.

### **WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?**

If the district plans to close schools for the day due to inclement weather, the district attempts to make the decision by 6 a.m., if not the night before. In the case of an early dismissal due to winter weather, it is our intent to communicate a decision no later than 11:00 a.m. Emergency situations may occur requiring a decision to occur later than 11:00 a.m.

### **HOW DO WE CONTACT PARENTS?**

If the district plans to close schools due to inclement weather, the announcement is immediately posted on the official district social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter. The announcement is also posted on the district webpage. When weather related closings occur, parents and staff will receive notification from our messaging service, Thrillshare, as soon as possible to alert them of the closing. The district will also communicate the closing by email through the TeacherEase system.

Local news outlets are also notified; however, parents should be aware that the district does not have direct control over how quickly or accurately closings are reported by the media.

If a decision is made in the early morning hours, parents and staff members will receive phone calls starting at 6 a.m., although the decision may be posted prior to 6 a.m. on social media accounts.

**ATHLETICS/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

If school is not in session, all athletic and extra-curricular activities including practices may be cancelled. Parents will be contacted if cancellations occur.

**ADDITIONAL FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR THE DISTRICT TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS TOO MUCH SNOW, TOO MUCH ICE, OR IT IS TOO COLD TO CONDUCT SCHOOL**

**ROAD CONDITIONS:**

The following road conditions are considered when determining to keep schools open or to close. They are found in priority order:

1. Main streets in the school district used for bus routes and stops.
2. Highways in the school district used for bus routes and/or stops.
3. Parking lots of school buildings.
4. Entrances and sidewalks to each school building.
5. Side streets, cul-de-sacs, or streets where bus routes or stops are not located.

**CLOSING SCHOOL DUE TO EXCESSIVE COLD:**

Wind Chill	0 to -20	Schools will likely remain open
Wind Chill	-21 to -25	The district will strongly consider closing
Wind Chill	-26 or colder	Schools will close

