School Closings, Late Starts & Emergencies

Esko Public Schools · A guide for families

How decisions are made

- **Safety of students and staff comes first.** Every weather decision starts and ends with that question.
- The superintendent decides, working with our transportation directors, who check road conditions on Esko bus routes together from the evening into the early morning. We also consult with **township road personnel**.
- Decisions are based on **conditions in Esko**: road conditions on our routes, **National Weather Service forecasts**, wind chill and extreme cold, and visibility and blowing snow. Neighboring districts' decisions are considered, but conditions on our routes come first.
- **Every school day matters.** Time in school matters for learning, activities and the routines students count on. For some students, school is also a source of meals and support. When it's safe and appropriate, we want students in school.
- **If school is open as usual, no announcement is made.** We announce only late starts, early dismissals, closures and e-learning days.
- If weather becomes unsafe during the school day, we decide as quickly as possible and notify families right away.
- **Weather isn't perfectly predictable.** We rely on National Weather Service forecasts, but storms can arrive earlier, later or stronger than predicted. We make each call with the best information we have, we always lean toward safety, and we work hard to get it right.

4:30 a.m.
Superintendent and transportation staff check roads and routes

5:15 a.m.
Recommendation to the superintendent

5:30 a.m.
Decision made; notifications begin

6:00 a.m.
All notifications complete

Closing the night before? If school needs to close the evening before a school day, families will be notified **by 9:30 p.m.**

How we notify families

- **Phone, text and email** through **Infinite Campus Messenger**. Keep your contact information current in Infinite Campus.
- **District website** (esko.k12.mn.us) and **Facebook**.
- **Local TV and radio:** KBJR 6, WDIO 10, FOX 21 and WKLK.

What each type of change means

	Closure	Late start (2 hours)	Early dismissal	E-learning day
K-12 classes	Canceled	Start 2 hours late	Students sent home early	Learning at home
Activities & athletics	Canceled (unless specified by activities director)	Held as scheduled	Canceled for the rest of the day	Per activities director
School Readiness / preschool	Canceled	Canceled for the day	Canceled for the rest of the day	Canceled
Community Ed classes & building rentals	Canceled; buildings closed	Morning canceled; afternoon/evening as scheduled	After-school and evening canceled	Per Community Ed
School-age care	Not open	Opens late by the same amount	Closes at dismissal time	Not open

E-learning days

- On some weather days, Esko may use an **e-learning day** instead of canceling school. Learning continues at home, and the day does not need to be made up at the end of the year.
- Esko Public Schools' practice is to use **two traditional snow days** (full cancellations) before holding e-learning days.
- Teachers will share assignments through Seesaw, Canvas or paper packets. Questions go to your child's teacher.
- When an e-learning day can be foreseen, iPads may be sent home with students who don't usually have one at home.

When school is not in session

- If severe weather affects evening, weekend or summer activities, check the district website and Facebook for cancellations, or contact Community Education at **218-879-4038**.

Family responsibilities

- The district is responsible for students once they board an Esko bus or arrive on school grounds.
- Families are responsible for getting students to the bus stop or school safely and **dressing them for the weather**: coats, hats, gloves and boots on cold days.
- You know your child and your road. If you feel it's unsafe to send your child on a day school is open, keep them home and call the school office. The absence will be excused per district policy.
- Have a backup childcare plan ready for closures and early dismissals.

Other emergencies

- Our schools practice lockdown, evacuation and shelter procedures throughout the year.
- During an emergency, please **do not come to the school or call the building** unless asked. This keeps phone lines and roads open for emergency responders.
- Watch for official messages from the district. If students need to be picked up at another location, we will tell you where and how.