

SCHOOL CLOSING GUIDELINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE SCHOOLS

Determining whether school is open or closed seems simple. In reality it is not. Closing school is always a touchy subject with students, parents and employees. Knowing some of the facts will help you understand the procedures Christian Life Schools follow.

In this correspondence you will find answers to the following questions:

- Who decides what, as far as school closing is concerned?
- How do you determine if it is safe or not to hold school?
- How do you determine if it is too snowy, too cold or too hot in order to close school?
- What should parents do to be prepared for bad weather and possible school closings?
- Where can I find information about school closings?

Should you have any questions about this information, please contact your school principal in the elementary or MS/HS office at your earliest convenience.

Who decides what as far as school closing is concerned?

What makes closing schools difficult are the circumstances surrounding the decision. The safety of the students and our employees is the first priority. Safety is everyone's responsibility. When the Rockford area is slated for snow, sleet, high or low temperatures, CLS administrators assess weather conditions, facility preparedness and community conditions. Below are the responsibilities of Christian Life administration and staff in some of those important areas.

Director of Buildings and Grounds

- Maintenance crews plow, salt, and clean parking lots, sidewalks and entrances (Begins after midnight based upon prediction of precipitation)
- Assess conditions throughout the day for continued work
- Assess heating and air-conditioning systems for climate control
- Assess power needs for the day or evening activities

Roger Beary, HS Principal

- Assess the Weather Channel site at www.weatherchannel.com
- Determines in consultation with the other principals if schools are open or closed
- Consults with Director of Buildings & Grounds for a final decision
- Posts closing on radio and television

Larry Goodrich, MS Principal

- Assess National Weather Service site at www.weather.gov
- Initiates staff telephone tree and parent text service

Christine Golembiesky, Elementary Principal

- Initiates emergency hotline message, and constant contact email
- Coordinates school calendar with the Illinois State Board of Education and Winnebago County Regional Office of Education

How do you determine if it is safe or not to hold school?

The following process takes place the morning of a day that weather is predicted to be questionable:

- 5:00 AM** Since Christian Life Schools is located within the boundaries of Rockford School District #205, we follow the directives of #205 in matters of school closings due to snowfall.
- 5:15 AM** If the decision is to close school due to snowfall, then the radio station and all three television stations are contacted so that they can begin to communicate the closing notice.
- 5:20 AM** The Emergency Communication system begins which includes the following.
1. Send out an email Constant Contact notice to school parents notifying them of the closing..
 2. Send text alert to parents/staff who are subscribed to the text alert system (beginning 2011-2012)
 3. Set message on Christian Life Schools Emergency Hotline to communicate closing.
 4. Notify all CLS faculty and staff, Rockford First administration office, and Rockford First youth ministries of the closing by telephone tree/text tree.
- 10:00 AM** Determine if after school or evening activities or meetings will be cancelled
1. Call athletic director of visiting team(s), if applicable, discuss options, and make a decision. Communicate the decision with officials, coaches and players.
- 10:00 AM** If school is in session and snowfall is extreme a determination may be made to decide whether schools will be dismissed early for the day.
1. Discuss decision with administrative team
 2. Students must be in attendance for 5 hours for the day to count on the school calendar - ISBE & School Code rule.
 3. If closing early, start communication system for parental notification so students will have an emergency plan of action available.
- 12:00 Noon** Notify all sponsors, administrators and students if afternoon or evening activities or meetings are cancelled. Post evening cancellations on radio, TV, constant contact email, and emergency hotline message.
- 8:00 PM** Monitor weather for next day determination.

How do you determine if it is too snowy, too cold or too hot in order to close school?

Closing School Due to Snowfall:

Rockford Public School District #205 personnel are in contact with the Rockford and Winnebago Public Works Departments. Other agencies like the police, fire department and emergency management are also consulted when appropriate. Since Christian Life Schools are located within the boundaries of District #205, we, traditionally, have found it advantageous to follow their lead in the matter of school closing due to snowfall.

Closing School Due to Excessive Heat or Cold:

As long as the buildings have working systems for heating and air conditioning, when excessive temperatures exist, the school building is one of the safest places student can be housed. Should heating and air conditioning systems not be working, school could be closed for the entire day or part of the day. That decision is based upon the circumstance including additional information related to electricity, water, and length of time till the system is repaired.

All things being considered if heating and air-conditioning systems are working and the road conditions are appropriate, school will be in session.

School Closing Parameters* for Heat or Cold:

Heat:

Temperature - 90 degrees	Relative Humidity - 90%	School open
Temperature- 95 degrees	Relative Humidity – 70 %	School may open
Temperature – 100 degrees	Relative Humidity – 55 % or higher	School may close

Cold:

Temperature 0 degrees	Wind Chill 0 to -30	School open
Temperature -20 degrees	Wind Chill -15 to -39	School may open
Temperature -20 degrees	Wind Chill Over -39	School may close

*Parameters used for decision making options only and are not viewed as absolute or finite.

What should parents do to be prepared for bad weather and possible school closing?

At the beginning of each school year or periodically throughout the school year, design or review an emergency plan with your child (ren) in case of school closing or early dismissal. Include in the plan the following:

- Correct emergency phone numbers
- Procedures in case no one is home
- Child care arrangements at a short notice, if appropriate
- School numbers and school contact people
- Access to 911 or ambulance if needed
- Other emergency arrangements as needed

Watch for weather advisories or warnings on the TV, internet or radio.

- CLS closing notices are phoned in to the Rockford TV stations
- Comcast Cable Channel 3
 - <http://www.wrex.com/Global/caterory.asp?C=123706>
- Comcast Cable Channel 4
 - <http://mystateline.com/news/schoolclosings>
- Comcast Cable Channel 5
 - <http://www.wifr.com/closings>

If the school district is in session you can do one of the following:

- Make sure your child is properly dressed for the weather – hot or cold
- Send your child to school following your regular routine
- Provide transportation to school for your child
- Set up a car pool to school with other parents and students
- Keep your child home until you feel the weather is safe.
- Please notify the school if you decide to keep your child at home.

Where can I find information about school closings?

School Closing Information:

School Information via Email:

E-mail notification from Christian Life Schools (Constant Contact) [provided the school offices have your most recent email address on file]

School Information via Local Media:

Any Rockford TV Station – Channels 13, 17, 23 or your local cable system

- Comcast Cable Channel 3 (WREX-TV)
 - <http://www.wrex.com/Global/caterory.asp?C=123706>
- Comcast Cable Channel 4 (WTVO-TV)
 - <http://mystateline.com/news/schoolclosings>
- Comcast Cable Channel 5 (WIFR-TV)
 - <http://www.wifr.com/closings>

Radio Stations WROK-AM 1440

School Information via Text Messaging:

In order to subscribe, one must text "CLSEAGLES" to 25827.

School Information Via Telephone:

815-639-7534 for CLS Emergency Hotline or 815-877-2560 (ELEM) or 815-877-2623 (MS) or 815-877-5749 (HS); follow the directory to CLS Hotline for recorded emergency closing message.

For Weather information:

National Weather Service Web Site – www.weather.gov

Weather Channel Web Site – www.weatherchannel.com

- Comcast Cable Channel 13 (The Weather Channel)