

McKenzie County Public School District #1
General Weather Statement and Guidelines
Updated 2024-2025

1. Safety is the number one priority in addressing weather related situations on student contact days. Careful consideration is made in determining changes to the school schedule related to weather conditions. However, we are also reminded that North Dakota winters can be long and involve regular snowfall and general challenging winter conditions; there will be days on which considerable snow is taking place and it is deemed safe to have school and our buses to transport students safely to school. A specific amount of snow or otherwise is not a clear determination of weather decisions; conditions such as temperature and wind speed are also factors in the decision.
2. The timeframe for which a decision is made regarding winter conditions is generally 6:00 to 6:15 AM CST. The first bus pickup is 6:45 AM; a decision is often made as buses leave around 6:00 AM and reports of road conditions are reported. In some cases of which weather information is available, a decision MAY be made the previous evening if feasible. This should NOT be the expectation and can occur when it is reasonable to do so. Variances in weather can create issues with such calls made prior to the morning of, however, calls will be considered for the convenience of parents/families in planning their next day accordingly.
3. The conditions in our school district boundary (consisting of 1,678 square miles) vary greatly, of which calls may be made for certain areas involving bus service and are accounted for at the building levels. School may be on schedule; however, the outlying areas may have different calls regarding bus service and expectations for attendance. Such situations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and the student will not be penalized for being in one of these areas due to specific weather conditions.
4. The following are potential calls which the school district would make regarding the weather or unforeseen situation impacting a school day:
 - a. Late Start – covered in separate guidelines available on the website.
 - b. Early Dismissal – covered in separate guidelines available on the website.
 - c. School cancelled – no school services available for any students, buildings closed.
 - d. No bus service provided – this will be implemented when situations arise of which it is not safe to offer school bus service, however, it may be feasible to hold school as scheduled. This would be implemented due to specific road conditions or temperature (see separate guidelines). The school district will NOT run buses for in-city or rural separately, it will be all or no service. The exception will be specific routes of which will be determined by Harlow's Bus Service as necessary and communicated through Bus Bulletin. This can be used in conjunction with a school on-time or late start determination.
 - e. Virtual day – The school district has policy allowing for virtual days to be used for reasons related to winter weather conditions. The school district may determine a virtual day based on weather forecasts and preferentially prior notice to allow students to bring technology devices home. Expectations for virtual days are outlined in student handbooks related to attendance and class expectations.
5. School district policy prioritizes the use of traditional in-person instruction as the priority and best approach to student success. A school cancellation day will be made-up as per the two storm days denoted in the school district calendar. Once these two days have been used, the school district will consider the use of virtual days or other make-up options to

provide the instructional hours outlined in the school calendar. The school district WILL use its storm days prior to consideration of virtual days, unless unique circumstances exist of which virtual is considered a viable option.

6. Weather/road reports and actual conditions may vary in many cases; despite weather or road reports, the school district may choose to run buses or have school on-time. The delay in road reports and no travel advisories often means it does not reflect current situations or will change soon. Please note a no-travel advisory is often lifted in early morning hours and the school district may plan to start school based on actual conditions and assumptions of the advisory being lifted prior to most of the travel taking place.
7. Parents/guardians have the final voice in determining safe conditions to attend school on a winter weather day. It is the choice of a parent to send their child on the bus or drive them to school on a day on which weather is a concern in your geographic location. It may be feasible to have school on a particular day based on overall conditions, however, certain areas may differ in the road/weather conditions. If the parental decision is to hold students' home on such a day, special circumstances will be used for attendance, and it will NOT "count against the student" based on communication with the school building office. Parents/guardians are asked to work with the school district and to report to school whenever it is feasible during the school day; our school contact days are highly valued, and our priority is protecting these days to the highest level and maintaining the safety of our students and parents at the same time.
8. It is a rare occurrence, however, if weather does not allow safe transportation of students to their homes, the school district will keep the students in the buildings and provide security and supervision until conditions change and allow for transportation home. This is considered the last option, however, is feasible if needed to maintain the safety of students and families traveling to pick up their students. The identification of storm homes within the City of Watford City may be advisable for such situations.
9. MCPSD #1 has the largest geographic school district in North Dakota and an extensive transportation system. The system is well prepared to deliver services in a variety of weather or in road conditions; Harlow's provides training and support for drivers in all conditions. Our mission is to provide the highest quality transportation for all conditions; because of North Dakota's unique and quick weather patterns, there is often not one solution to every school situation involving the weather. The school district asks for cooperation and consideration in such cases to make the best of any situation and to ensure students are safe and have access to the highest levels of education and in-person experience whenever possible.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration regarding winter conditions and school attendance.