Winter 2019-20

Dear Orchard View Parents:

Winter weather in West Michigan will soon be here and can be very inconvenient for students and parents. Sometimes weather conditions are difficult to predict, especially if the bad weather is anticipated to arrive later in a school day. The decision to cancel school generally occurs in the early morning of the cancelled day. Occasionally, we have enough information from the Michigan State Police and the National Weather Service to cancel school the night before thus providing time for parents to make arrangements for the day school is closed. Since weather can be so unpredictable, we do our best to make decisions that ultimately keep our children, staff and parents safe.

Orchard View Schools provides transportation for over 2000 students. Any time we close school there are several people we communicate with before making the decision. We have employees who drive the local roads before 5:00 a.m. and assess the conditions. Early morning drivers communicate with other local school districts to discuss road conditions, visibility and safety concerns for students, bus drivers, parents, and staff. All Muskegon County Superintendents also communicate with each other before and after a school closing decision is made.

A question I often get is, “If school is in session and the weather becomes really bad, will you send students home early?” Almost certainly, the answer is no. Although our parent calling system is efficient, we cannot assure small children can be picked up from bus stops or parents will be home in time to meet their children if the daily schedule is changed. Please know buses generally run a little late when the weather impedes the roads.

In the event school is closed, our School Messenger system will send a message to the phone number listed on your student’s enrollment card. Parents may also choose to receive messages via text, e-mail or by cell phone. In addition, a message will be posted on our Facebook and website pages. Area television stations will scroll closings during their broadcasts.

Michigan Public Schools have six (6) Mother Nature days provided by the State. If schools exceed six days they are required to make the days up. Typically, this is done at the end of the school year.

Safety of our students and staff will always be in the forefront of a school closing decision. Educating our students is our mission and cold, wintry days come along with the challenge.

Thank you for your continued understanding. Stay warm and safe this winter season.

Jim Nielsen, Superintendent
Orchard View Schools