

Weather and Climate News

Matt Mikus · February 3, 2023 9:30 AM

How cold before school is canceled in Minnesota? All depends on the district



A school bus stops at a stop sign in South Minneapolis on Nov. 29. School districts consider varying thresholds and conditions before they consider closing or delaying school due to cold weather. Kerem Yücel | MPR News 2022

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When the temperature drops, students and parents might wonder how cold it has to get before their school calls off classes. Turns out, it all depends on the school district.

Dangerously cold conditions Friday prompted some school districts in Minnesota to cancel or delay classes. Duluth Public Schools canceled classes “due to extremely cold weather and wind chills.”

Hibbing and Chisholm schools moved to online learning days Friday. Cloquet, International Falls and Hinckley-Finlayson were among the school districts

that announced plans to start two hours late.

There were no widespread school closures or delays in the Twin Cities or the rest of southern Minnesota on Friday; check with your local district for updates.

A wind chill warning remains in effect through noon for northeast Minnesota, where readings may drop to 50 below zero. Wind chill advisories are in place across the rest of the state, for wind chills of 30 to 40 below.



Minneapolis Public Schools [policy states it considers](#) holding an e-learning day if wind chill forecasts for the following morning reach negative 35 degrees or colder with winds of at least 5 to 10 mph around 6:30 a.m.

St. Paul Public Schools may call an e-learning day if wind chills are forecasted to be negative 35 or colder at 6 a.m., according to the [school district's website](#).

In the Red River Valley region, Moorhead — along with Fargo and West Fargo — all consider different factors when deciding on whether to close school or not, but [according to the Fargo Forum](#), there aren't set thresholds for temperature or weather conditions that trigger an automatic closing.

Anoka-Hennepin's [policy on its website states](#) that it relies on the National Weather Service's warning system. If NWS issues a wind chill warning where exposed skin can become frostbitten in less than 15 minutes, "then the district will likely make a decision to close."

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage schools in [ISD 191 have a policy](#) of canceling school if the NWS forecast for 6 a.m. shows an air temperature of below negative 25 degrees or a wind chill of below 35 degrees below zero.

In St. Cloud, [cold-weather closures](#) may occur if NWS forecasts 35 degrees below zero in either base temperature or wind chill within the city of St. Cloud. The district notes that if the temperature is predicted to rise above negative 35 by 9:30 a.m., it will consider a two-hour delay.

Grand Rapids schools [list on the ISD 318 website](#) that a wind chill of negative 50 degrees is used to consider "closing schools due to cold weather," though the final call is made by the superintendent. The district also notes that conditions can range throughout the region, so closures can occur for Bigfork only, should the need arise.

The University of Minnesota's [policy for cold weather closures](#) said if air temperatures or sustained windchill are at or below negative 35 degrees for more than three consecutive hours between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. "the campus will consider the need for reduced operations."

Districts around Minnesota also may not set a threshold for cold weather, so when in doubt, it's best to monitor your local school district communication channels regarding closures and e-learning days because of cold weather or snow.

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