



2010/11 IHM EMERGENCY DELAY, CLOSING AND EARLY DISMISSAL



We follow Forest Hills School District procedures for late arrival, closing and early dismissal.

When there is inclement weather we completely understand that parents may make the decision to bring their child in late, or not at all, for safety reasons. Those students will be marked 'excused' although they will still be marked as 'tardy' or 'absent.'

When ANY school district sends their buses to Immaculate Heart of Mary School for an early dismissal, students will be placed on that bus. The exception would be students who do not ride the bus home after school (car riders will be picked up at the early dismissal time by their adult driver, who would know of the early dismissal via CNotify, radio or TV). As stated in our Handbook (refer to EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/SITUATION) "... *there may be a situation that calls for special preparedness on the parts of families and students... may include early dismissals... BE CERTAIN YOUR CHILD KNOWS WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL.*" What would your child do if sent home early from school on the bus and you are not home? What if he/she forgot the house key? What if the backup neighbor is not home? **You must have a Family Emergency Plan.**

We do the best we can and depend on parents to help plan for these types of situations. Our goal is the same:
Keep the Children Safe!



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Who makes the decision to close school or call for a late arrival or early dismissal? Our school has no control over these decisions, which are made by the individual school districts. We worry about the safety of our students in these situations. PLEASE formulate a safe plan for your children.

I don't live in Forest Hills. If my school district is closed do my children still have to come to school if Forest Hills is open? If you live outside of the Forest Hills School District (*West Clermont, Milford, Bethel, New Richmond, City of Cincinnati, etc.*) it is your responsibility to make sure students arrive on time to our school in the morning, even if your school district is on a delay or closed. If you live outside of the Forest Hills School District and your bus system has a delay, your children will be marked 'excused tardy/absent' if they ride that bus to our school. If the student will be late/absent the parent must still call our absent/tardy line (388-5650). It is YOUR decision, however, as to whether it is safe to bring your child out in inclement weather.

How will I know there is a delay, closing or early dismissal? You will receive a message on your home phone in the morning for delay and closing information through our CNotify system. During the school day if there is an early dismissal we will use our best judgment to contact you using all possible contacts on your CNotify system.

Strange situations DO happen. In the event of a power outage we will not be able to send a CNotify message. If you feel the weather is dangerous listen to local radio and TV channels and look for the announcement under "Forest Hills"... The winter of 2004 there was an unusual situation where the Forest Hills public school students had the day off for a staff in-service but IHM was scheduled for school that day. Forest Hills needed to announce that the Catholic schools they service were closed due to weather – but if they did it the usual way their staff would not show up for the in-service, which was not called off. In that case our school was listed under "Immaculate Heart of Mary."

I live in West Clermont, New Richmond, Bethel, etc. Will you call me in the morning using CNotify to let me know that those school districts are on a delay or closed so I know the bus schedule has been changed?
No. We will only call you in the morning with Forest Hills information. We WILL, however, notify you if there is an early dismissal and your school district decides to pick up your child early. The reason for this decision: school districts other than Forest Hills do not contact us in the morning regarding delays and closings but they do contact us regarding early dismissals. We only relay official information.

What is the parents' responsibility?

- Make sure the school office has your current home/cell/e-mail information at all times. [CNotify is updated by the office on a weekly basis.](#)
- During inclement weather wait for CNotify or listen to the radio/TV for school district updates. If it is not possible for you to listen for these announcements make a plan with a friend or neighbor to keep you informed. If your district calls for an early dismissal, and there is time, you may call our school office (388-4086) to leave a message for your child if you plan to come to school to pick him/her up. It is usually safer for students to be on a bus, rather than an automobile, in bad weather. If you usually drive your child home after school, plan to be here at the dismissal time.
- Make sure your child has the Family Emergency Plan sheet in his/her book bag at all times. Keep the information up to date – it will tell your child and the teacher what to do. Do NOT indicate that the child should make a phone call from school as this will not be possible. This form is on our school website.
- There is NO AFTERCARE PROGRAM on early dismissal days. Our staff has the right to arrive home safely, too.

Will you use text messaging? The decision of whether to use phones, e-mail and/or text messages will be made by the school office, depending on each situation. Generally we do NOT text message.

If an early dismissal is called what is the school's responsibility? Our responsibility is to see the children are safely on the bus. Parents with children in our After-Care Program will be called to pick up their children by the early dismissal time.

What are the 'above the call of duty' things for school closings, delays and early dismissals that the school has considered, or that the school currently implements?

- Our CNotify system will call and e-mail 400+ families within 15 minutes. CNotify is a voice message and will leave a message on the first work number that is connected (it cannot dial phone extensions). Wait for the message – it takes a few seconds for it to begin so don't hang up!!
- Publishing information on the Web would not be timely enough to be effective. We will try to run a banner on the school website main page, but do not depend on this as your main source.
- Parent/PTO managed phone chains would not be effective. Our 400+ families have multiple phone numbers with updates coming to the office daily. This is confidential information so parents would have the responsibility of updating their numbers not only with the school but also with the phone chain parents. The responsibility would be shifted from the parent of the child to the phone chain adult.
- Early Dismissals: We have a very limited number of telephones which is why we have the CNotify system (sometimes time is VERY limited before the buses arrive for an early dismissal). You know how difficult it is to make transportation arrangement for your own children – please remember we have 690+ children to consider. Do not tell your child to telephone you from school as this will not happen. Remember that cell phones and pagers are not permitted at school (refer to the Handbook).

This memo is always available as a LINK at the top of the weekly Newsletter page on the website.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and let's all pray for a safe winter!

Debbi Hill