



IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

Each winter there is always the possibility that school will close early during the day due to weather conditions. The purpose of this letter is to request/require each family to do preliminary planning with their children so that school can be closed as efficiently and as safely as possible. Please be reassured that your child will not be left unattended/unsupervised at school.

The school will release based on written documentation provided to the school. No phone calls please because we do not have the ability to relay these messages to all of the teachers in a timely manner.

Severe Weather Closings: Announcements by the Director of Schools Jack Parton concerning the closing of the school in Sevier County will be made on local radio and television stations as well as the school system's website (<http://www.sevier.org>). Pi Beta Phi sends out Tweets on its Twitter Account, Remind 101 Text service, as well as posts closing on the school's website. In the event of an emergency or abrupt closing, a phone messaging service will be utilized. When the primary phone number for a student changes, the primary parent or guardian should contact school officials and request that the child's phone numbers be updated on all enrollment information as well as in the districts messaging system. MIX (105.5) in Sevierville is usually the first station to have information on school closings. Please listen to these stations and do not call the school. We will need to keep the lines free for emergency use.

Each family is encouraged to follow these recommendations and related information:

1. Listen to the weather forecast carefully during the winter months. If snow/sleet/ice is in the forecast, be prepared for the possibility that school might need to close early. Arrange your personal and business plans in such a way that you are able to pick up your child early in the day or have a designated person on standby if you are out of town or out of telephone reach. Listen to the local radio stations for weather and school closing information. Follow PBP on our Twitter Account or sign up for Remind 101 text messages to get instant, updated information. (It is requested that you NOT call the school).
2. Develop a family plan with your child (children). Let them know and the school in advance what you expect them to do. The school will follow the written document and not be able to take phone calls the day of the closing to change plans. Please adhere to the written plan you send in so that we can quickly and safely dismiss early if needed. We recommend keeping a copy of your written plan for yourself by taking a cell phone picture of it for easy reference.

- 3. Be sure that you have updated phone numbers and addresses on file at the school at all times. Please remember that the school must be able to reach the parent or the parent's designated contact persons at all times. The parent's contact person must be in the Gatlinburg area, especially for the emergency closing of the school. Sometimes, parents will list relatives who live out of state or out of the county, which does not help during this kind of circumstance.**
- 4. In most cases, buses will operate when school is closed early. Students who normally ride the bus home in the afternoon will be expected to ride the bus when school closes early. You are encouraged to identify a neighbor, relative, or friend to supervise your child if your child arrives early by bus. In prior years, there have been weather conditions when buses could not run safely. In those circumstances, it is imperative that parents be aware of the need to come to the school to transport children. The Gatlinburg Police and Fire Departments are always helpful in transporting stranded students; however, parents (or neighbors) should make an effort to try to come to the school.**

It is also helpful if parents/neighbors form community carpools to assist with student transportation; however, this requires pre-planning and cooperation on the part of the parent. Please remember that parents must give written permission for others to pick up their child which makes it very important to keep the information updated in the school office.

If you plan to pick up your child, we will try to have a staff person at the entrance in the parking lot as soon as possible to communicate with the office via two-way radio. It is requested that you remain in your car so that traffic congestion will be minimized.

- 5. In order to have a smooth and safe dismissal of school when weather forces the school to close early, each family must complete the Individual Transportation Early Dismissal Plan. The school will follow the written plan; therefore, it is imperative that any contact information, change of address, or change of plan be updated.**
- 6. Please update the attached form and return only the attached information form to your child's homeroom teacher. Please keep the other portion of this notice at home as a point of reference or take a cell phone picture and store on your phone for easy reference.**