Subject: Update: New Winter Weather & Extreme Cold Protocols

Dear Northwest Indiana Lighthouse Families,

As we prepare for the winter season in Northwest Indiana, we know that lake-effect snow and bitter temperatures are inevitable. We also understand that changes to the school schedule disrupt your work and family routines.

To provide you with more predictability and transparency, we have updated our Inclement Weather Policy. Moving forward, we are adopting objective, data-driven temperature thresholds based on National Weather Service (NWS) safety charts.

Our primary goal is to ensure that no student is waiting for a bus or walking to school when the risk of frostbite becomes immediate or snowfall is too great.

Our Updated Decision Guidelines

When evaluating whether to delay or close school due to temperature, we will look at the Wind Chill (what the air feels like), not just the air temperature.

- 🟡 2-HOUR DELAY:
  - Trigger: When wind chills are forecast between -10°F and -19°F.
  - Reasoning: This allows the sun to rise and temperatures to climb slightly. It also gives our buses extra time to warm up and ensures our facilities are heating properly before students arrive.
  - For scholars taking transportation, the pick-up time will be pushed back two hours (i.e. if your pick-up time is 6:27 the new time will be 8:27; allowing that 5-minute grace period). School will still end on time.
- 🔴 SCHOOL CLOSURE:
  - Trigger: When wind chills are forecast to be -20°F or colder (or air temperature is below -10°F).
  - Reasoning: At these levels, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in less than 30 minutes. The risk to students waiting at bus stops or walking becomes too high to justify opening.

*When evaluating whether to delay or close school due to snow, we will look at the projected snow accumulation and its timing.

Communication Timeline

We aim to make decisions as early as possible.

- The "Night Before": If a Wind Chill *Warning* is issued by the NWS (predicting dangerous conditions well in advance), we will attempt to call the closure by 9:00 PM the evening prior. This will also be done in cases with extreme snow via [Text/Email/Robocall/ClassDojo/SocialMedia]
- The "Morning Of": For fluctuating conditions, a final decision will be made and communicated no later than 5:00 AM via [Text/Email/Robocall/ClassDojo/SocialMedia].

A Note for Our Commuter Families

As a school community, we recognize that our student body does not live in a single neighborhood; many of you travel significant distances across county lines to get here. Weather conditions in Hammond or Gary may differ from those in Valparaiso or Crown Point.

Your judgment as a parent is paramount. If school is open, but you believe road conditions or temperatures in your specific area make travel unsafe, you may keep your student home. Please simply notify the attendance office, and this will be marked as an Excused Absence.

Preparing Your Student

Please remember that even on "Normal" days, winter in NWI is harsh.

- Students should arrive with heavy coats, hats, and gloves.
- If the wind chill is below 10°F during the school day, all recess and physical education will be held indoors.

Please remember dismissal will remain at the normal time despite a late start. Thank you for your partnership and flexibility as we navigate the winter months ahead.

Warmly,

Northwest Indiana Lighthouse Charter School Teams