

December-Winter Safety

Cold temperatures, wind chills, snow and ice are all part of the South Dakota winter season. This weather takes a toll on man, beast and machinery. We, as hardy SD residents, know this but “kids will be kids” and they seem to need constant reminders.

The risk of frostbite is high for our students as they walk to and from school, play at recess or play outside at home. I often see students walking to school without hats or their coats half-zipped in the morning. It is important that if students are going to be outside, that they dress appropriately. The body heat that is trapped inside clothing is the best protection from the cold. Winter clothing should have layers to be the most effective at retaining heat. If snow boots are not quite warm enough, wear two pairs of socks. Heat rises so keep in body heat by wearing a hat. Scarves and gloves are essential to protecting skin.

Students should be coming to school with winter coats, hats, gloves and boots. Elementary students need snow pants for going outside at recess. These clothes should be part of a student’s wardrobe if they walk, ride the bus or even if they are driving themselves to school. Teenagers may not “need a coat” but they should have heavier clothes in the vehicle with them. The interior temperature of a car drops fast when it is sitting on the side of the road or in the ditch. Winter can be dangerous but with a little preparation and common sense, we can all avoid frostbite and/or hypothermia.

For more information, you can access these sites:

www.sddot.com

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter>