



Heat Policy 2024

Extreme heat or heatwave is a period of unusual and uncomfortable hot weather that can negatively affect health. Children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress therefore schools must be able to recognise and treat heat related illness and have strategies to manage prolonged periods of extreme heat.

In times of predicted high temperatures, the school may invoke the 'Heat Policy'.

The KSESC Heat Policy is as follows:

Early intervention

It is important for school staff to know the signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to respond.

Some heat-related illnesses and common symptoms include:

- deterioration in existing medical conditions
- heat rash
- heat cramps - these include muscle pains or spasms
- dizziness and fainting
- heat exhaustion - warning signs may include paleness and sweating, rapid heart rate, muscle cramps, headache, nausea and vomiting, dizziness or fainting.
- **heatstroke** - The person may stagger, appear confused, have a fit, collapse and become unconscious. **This is a medical emergency and requires urgent attention.**

Treatment options vary according to the type of heat-related illness. If a student, staff member or visitor shows **any sign of heat exhaustion or heatstroke schools must apply first aid and seek medical assistance immediately.**

Prevention

To minimise the risks associated with extreme hot weather the school will review, and where practicable and appropriate, implement the following strategies:

- ensure the schools risk planning considers extreme heat and responses for power outage(s), transport delays and/or cancellation
- ensure adequate shade on school grounds from man-made structures (tents, sails and umbrellas) and/or trees.
- educate and encourage students and school staff to stay hydrated and display heat guidelines and charts in prominent locations in the school for reminders around hydration and symptoms.
- have water fountains located around the school premises
- review first aid kits and consider the inclusion of additional ice packs and hydrolytes

Preparedness

The school will monitor predicted weather conditions and modify school routines and planning accordingly. During a period of extreme heat schools should also actively consider:

- ensuring indoor spaces have open doors and windows or air conditioning access during activities, especially during activity rest periods.
- modifying or postponing any planned vigorous activity.
- rescheduling/moving classes from classrooms with direct sunlight/no cooling.
- closing any internal and external blinds.
- selecting suitable uniform options.
- varying school hours by reducing midday recess to no less than thirty minutes and adjusting the dismissal time accordingly.

Note: Schools do not close at a certain temperature threshold during days of extreme heat; however, under emergency circumstances, schools may contact their regional director to consider appropriate actions.

Heat Health Alerts

Upon receiving advice of a Heat Health Alert schools should:

- notify parents/carers about school heat conditions and remind them to provide their child with water and apply SPF 50 sunscreen,
- include information on the school's heat protective procedures and processes in a communication,
- brief staff to be extra vigilant during periods of prolonged heat.

Health messages for students

Staff will include information about 'Heat Health' within their classroom programs, including:

- Drink water - even if you don't feel thirsty, drink water. Take a bottle with you always.
- Hot cars kill - never leave children, adults or pets in hot cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes.
- Keep cool - seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use a fan, take cool showers and dress in light and loose clothing made from natural fabrics.
- Plan ahead - schedule activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat. If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen and take a bottle of water with you.
- Help others - look after those most at risk in the heat – your neighbour living alone, the elderly, the young, people with a medical condition and don't forget your pets.