

Guidelines for Student Activities in Hot Weather

Heat-related illness, while serious and potentially life-threatening, is entirely preventable. There is no national temperature standard or specific rule for when to keep students inside during hot summer months. Most healthy children and athletes can safely participate in outdoor sports and activities in a wide range of challenging warm/hot weather conditions, provided that precautions are taken to avoid overheating.

The decision to modify or cancel outdoor physical activities due to weather conditions is made by the principal using a “common sense” approach. Consideration should be given to risk factors and the feasibility of implementing appropriate measures to keep students out of danger from overheating.

Environmental risk factors include air and ground temperature, access to shade, relative humidity, time of day, air movement, and duration, frequency and type of outdoor activity.

Individuals who are most susceptible to heat exhaustion or heat stroke include the very young, those with chronic health conditions or recent illness, those who exercise for prolonged periods or repeatedly without sufficient recovery time, and those who are poorly hydrated or unaccustomed to physical exertion, especially in warm weather conditions.

When a decision is made to allow students to participate in outdoor recess or P.E. under warm or hot weather conditions, the following preventative measures are essential to protecting their health and safety:

- Good hydration is essential; students are encouraged to bring containers of water to school and to keep well hydrated before and during outside activities
- Students should dress in lightweight clothing in keeping with the district’s dress code
- Students should be taught to recognize and self-report signs of heat-related illness

Signs and symptoms of heat-related illness indicate a dangerous rise in body temperature and should never be ignored. If untreated, the condition can quickly worsen and develop into a medical emergency. Here are a few symptoms that could indicate heat-related illness:

- Muscle cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weakness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Excess sweating or hot, dry skin

Treatment for signs of heat-related illness means taking steps to lower the body temperature. Stop exercise, move out of the heat and into an air conditioned or shaded area, drink plenty of water, remove extra clothing or sports equipment, wet the body down with cool (not icy) water. Seek immediate medical advice if symptoms do not rapidly improve.

For more specific information regarding heat-related illness, including prevention, symptoms, and first aid, go to these web sites:

www.washoecounty.us/health

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/news/Pages/AAP-Offers-New-Guidelines-to-Prevent-Heat-and-Illness-Injury-in-Young-Athletes.aspx>

http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp