



# HEAT HEALTH POLICY

## PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

To ensure schools have measures in place to prepare for and manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather, particularly if predicted for a consecutive period of days.

## POLICY

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.

### Early intervention

It is important that school staff know the signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to respond. See the Better Health website [Heat stress and heat-related illness](#) for detailed information.

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, PPPS has reviewed and where practicable and appropriate, will implement the following strategies:

- ensure the school's emergency management plan risk assessment considers extreme heat
- ensure adequate shade on school grounds from structures (permanent structures and sails) and/or trees
- educate and encourage students and school staff to stay hydrated with reminders about hydration
- have water fountains located around the school premises
- ensure the inclusion of ice packs in the first aid room

### Preparedness

Plenty Parklands Primary School subscribes to the Department of Health and Human Services Heat Health Alerts, for regular monitoring of outdoor weather conditions, and has access to the [VicEmergency App](#). The school has set up a watch zone to receive these health alerts.

During a period of extreme heat PPPS will also actively consider:

- ensuring indoor spaces have open doors and windows or air conditioning access during activities,
- modifying or postponing any planned vigorous activity, including physical education or school sporting events,
- closing any internal and external blinds
- selecting suitable uniform options

**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:

- brief staff to be extra vigilant during periods of prolonged heat.

### Other heat health messages

- Drink water - even if you don't feel thirsty, drink water. Take a bottle with you always.
- Keep cool – think about the games or activities you play.
- 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.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, new legislation and guidelines.

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in **November 2019** and is scheduled for review in **November 2021**.

**Endorsed by School Council in December 2019.**