



HEAT HEALTH POLICY

PURPOSE

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

SUMMARY

- 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 and therefore schools must have measures in place to prepare for and manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather.
- Schools do not close at a certain temperature threshold during days of extreme heat; however, under emergency circumstances, schools may contact their regional Manager, Emergency Management and Operations to consider appropriate actions.

DETAILS

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. For this reason, schools must be able to recognise and respond to heat related illness and have strategies to manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather and heat wave.

Schools must:

- be able to recognise and treat heat related illness
- have strategies in place to manage the risks associated with periods of extreme heat, including early intervention, prevention and preparedness measures, as outlined below.

Early intervention

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

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.**

Visit the Better Health website [Heat stress and heat-related illness](#) for detailed information.

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
- modify or postpone any planned vigorous activity
- 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

- have water fountains and drinking troughs located around the school premises
- review first aid kits and consider the inclusion of additional ice packs.

Preparedness

Plenty Parklands Primary School subscribes to the heat health alerts, advisories and newsletters for regular monitoring of outdoor weather conditions through the [Health Vic website](#) and has access to the [VicEmergency App](#).

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

Heat Health Alerts

Upon receiving advice of a heat health alert schools must brief staff:

- on the school's expectations in regard to management of the risks associated with extreme hot weather
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

RELATED POLICIES

- [Emergency and Critical Incident Planning](#)
- [First Aid for Students and Staff](#)
- [School Hours](#)
- [Student Dress Code](#)
- [Sun and UV Protection](#)
- [Risk Management — Schools](#)

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

EVALUATION

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	November 2021
Consultation	Leadership School Council
Approved	December 2021
Next scheduled review date	November 2023