

Managing excessive heat in schools

Ripley Valley State School Excessive Heat Policy

Guidelines

Heat management planning

- Visit [Managing excessive heat in schools](#) website for strategies to prepare for periods of excessive heat.

What to drink

- Queensland Department of Health recommends that during hot weather, water (room temperature or slightly cool rather than very cold) is the best fluid to drink.
- Drinks containing caffeine (tea, coffee, cola and some “energy” drinks) as well as drinks containing excessive sugar (soft drinks, colas, some “energy” and “sports” drinks) should be limited or avoided altogether.

Health effects of excessive heat

- Heat-related conditions cover a variety of symptoms ranging from swelling of hands and feet, prickly heat occurring in unacclimatised people and heat cramps, through to heat exhaustion, to the more severe and potentially fatal heatstroke.
- Visit [Workplace Health and Safety](#) website for information on heat stress.

Symptoms of heat stress

- Symptoms of more severe heat stress include malaise, headache, rapid pulse, nausea and vomiting.
- People with heat stroke usually have core body temperatures above 39 degrees Celsius and an altered mental state such as confusion, lethargy or agitation. Seizures and coma can follow.
- See Department of Health [Heat-related illness](#) for more information.

Playing and exercising safely in hot weather

- In any sporting or outdoor activity, the risk of heat stress increases with rising air temperature. This is the case for sporting participants, as well as umpires, officials and volunteers.
- Factors which need to be taken into account before considering cancelling or postponing a sporting event include but are not limited to:
 - the temperature – both ambient temperature and relative humidity
 - the duration and intensity of the event (for example, an endurance or distance event has more potential for problems than a stop-start team event)
 - rest and drink breaks
 - time of day
 - local environment
 - acclimatisation of the participants (for example, students visiting from hot, dry climates may not cope well with the hot, humid conditions of some northern, coastal regions)
 - fitness levels of participants
 - age and gender of participants.
- If the ambient temperature is between 31 and 35 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 50%, there is a high to very high risk of heat illness. Planned vigorous, sustained physical activity should be limited in intensity or duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
- If the ambient temperature is over 36 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 30%, there is an extreme risk of heat illness. Planned vigorous, sustained physical activity should be postponed to a cooler part of the day or even cancelled.
- View [Sports Medicine Australia Hot Weather Guidelines](#)

ORANGE (announced over PA) If the ambient temperature is between 31 and 35 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 50%, there is a high to very high

risk of heat illness. Planned vigorous, sustained physical activity should be limited in intensity or duration to less than 60 minutes per session.

Class Time

- Water bottles in classrooms
- Additional rest and drink breaks
- Spray bottles of water
- Cool storage area for lunches
- Fans turned on
- All windows opened

Lunch Breaks and Playtime

- Ensure all students are wearing hats
- Monitor students for heat related illnesses

PE Lessons

- All PE lessons conducted under cover
- Regular water breaks

RED (announced over PA)

If the ambient temperature is over 36 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 30%, there is an extreme risk of heat illness. Planned vigorous, sustained physical activity should be postponed to a cooler part of the day or even cancelled.

Class Time

In addition to orange strategies:

- Shoes and socks may be removed in the classroom
- Students may use cooling towels supplied from home
- Planned vigorous, sustained physical activity is postponed (eg. Cross country training, afternoon sport)
- Relocation to cooler areas of the school may be utilised (eg, hall under fans, covered areas outside classrooms)

Lunch Breaks and Playtime

- Covered play as per Playground Duty Roster

PE Lessons

- Must be undercover
- Program of instruction may need to be modified
- Additional water breaks

Students with Medical Needs (see High Medical Issues Document)

- Air conditioning in Admin may be accessed by these students

Resources

Heatwave Forecasts – Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/heatwave/#heatwave-forecasts>