



York Catholic District School Board

No. 221	Section: Students
Approved: June 6, 2006	
Board Revision Date(s):	
Implementation: Director of Education	

POLICY:

Extreme Weather Policy

In order to protect the health and safety of school-aged children attending York Catholic schools the Board has developed guidelines for periods of extreme weather conditions. Weather extremes place children at risk for serious adverse effects including frostbite, sunburn and skin cancer in the future.

These guidelines will be reviewed annually and communicated to schools in a timely manner appropriate to the conditions.

Cross reference: Inclement Weather Emergency Procedures Memorandum #51

Extreme Weather Guidelines

(Environment Canada's web site at www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca provides a valuable reference on all weather related topics - go to "frequently asked questions" and choose weather. Environment Canada provides resources for teachers and students)

York Region covers a large geographical area and conditions at schools may vary from place to place throughout the region. School administrators need to monitor local conditions and make the necessary adjustment keeping in mind the following guidelines.

Guidelines:

Weather conditions can change throughout the day. When weather conditions are questionable principals can consult Environment Canada's www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca for information as well as www.weathernetwork.ca for their local forecast.

Children need an opportunity to get exercise and free play time outdoors. However, weather conditions sometimes warrant indoor routines or a reduced activity level. Conditions requiring changes in normal practice are:

1. Rain, freezing rain, thunderstorms, lightning, hail, ice, extreme winds - requires indoor routines
2. Extreme cold weather – see below
3. Extreme hot weather - see below

EXTREME COLD WEATHER	
Temperature and or windchill of minus 20	Indoor routine
Temperature and or windchill minus 18-19	Lunchtime shortened to 20 minutes
STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED	
⇒	Refer to Environment Canada's WindChill Program - Wind Chill Hazards
⇒	Remind student to dress appropriately for the weather and ensure proper headwear, gloves/mittens, and footwear - winter boots etc
⇒	Children should be monitored closely for signs of frostnip, frostbite or difficulty breathing

EXTREME HOT WEATHER

HUMIDEX

Humidex over 40

Indoor routine

STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

- ⇒ Refer to Environment Canada information on humidity, humidex and guide to summer comfort, UV index
- ⇒ Personal water bottles will be allowed at student desks and outside if necessary
- ⇒ Staff and students must monitor their level of activity and take frequent breaks for water in order to remain adequately hydrated, especially during lunch hours.
- ⇒ Where possible, keep doors and windows open and lights off
- ⇒ Through regular communication practices (i.e., newsletters, morning announcements), remind parents and students to wear light weight and light coloured clothing and other hot weather necessities - hats, sun visors, sunscreen etc
- ⇒ Where there is air conditioning in libraries or specialty classrooms rotate groups of students into those rooms
- ⇒ Provide classrooms with fans by utilizing available funds (possible sources: Catholic School Councils, GSB, fundraising)
- ⇒ Remind students not to overexert themselves during recess periods

UV INDEX

UV Index of 6 (High) or over

Regular Routine with
Precautionary Measures Communicated
(Proper Sun Protection)

STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

- ⇒ Refer to Environment Canada information on humidity, humidex and guide to summer comfort, UV index
- ⇒ Raise awareness through regular communication practices (i.e., newsletters, morning announcements) and remind parents and students about UV rays and proper sun protection - hats, sun visors, sunglasses, long sleeved shirts, sunscreen, seek shade, etc.
- ⇒ Sunscreen will be made available in the office for student use at school, should it be needed

ADDITIONAL
RESOURCE
MATERIALS

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

Environment Canada Windchill

SOURCE: Environment Canada's Wind Chill Program (access information through Environment Canada website's "frequently asked questions" and choosing question on windchill.)

(www.msc.ec.gc.ca/education/windchill/index_e.cfm)

Wind Chill Hazards and Risk of Frostbite			
Wind Chill	Risk of frostbite	Health Concern	What to do
0 to -9	Low	- Slight increase in discomfort	- Dress warmly, with the outside temperature in mind.
-10 to -27	Low	- Uncomfortable - Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection	- Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. - Wear a hat, mittens and scarf. - Keep active.
-28 to -39	Increasing risk: exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes	- Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears and nose) for numbness or whiteness - Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection	- Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. - Cover exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens and a scarf, neck tube or face mask. - Keep active.
-40 to -47	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes*	- Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears and nose) for numbness or whiteness (frostbite) - Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection	- Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. - Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens and a scarf, neck tube or face mask. - Keep active.
WARNING LEVEL** -48 to -54	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in 2 to 5 minutes*	- Check face and extremities frequently for numbness or whiteness (frostbite) - Serious risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods	- Be careful. Dress very warmly in layers of clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. - Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens and a scarf, neck tube or face mask. - Be ready to cut short or cancel outdoor activities. - Keep active.
-55 and colder	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in less than 2 minutes	DANGER! - Outdoor conditions are hazardous	- Stay indoors.

- In sustained winds over 50 km/h, frostbite can occur faster than indicated.

Humidity

It's a well-known fact that the body retains more heat when the weather is hot and humid than it does during a drier but equally warm day. Why? As a response to excessive heat in the surrounding environment, our bodies perspire to make us feel cooler. Evaporation works best when the air is dry. In moist, saturated air, perspiration cannot evaporate as readily. The combination of excess heat and moisture will cause us to feel hot and sticky. As a rule of thumb, the higher the humidity, the greater the discomfort.

Relative humidity

Relative humidity is the amount of moisture that the air contains compared to how much it could hold at a given temperature. A figure of 100 per cent would mean that the air has become saturated. At this point, mist, fog, dew and precipitation are likely.

Relative humidity is normally at its maximum when the temperature is at its lowest point of the day, usually at dawn. Even though the absolute humidity may remain the same throughout the day, the changing temperature causes the ratio to fluctuate.

Humidex

The humidex is a Canadian innovation, first used in 1965. It was devised by Canadian meteorologists to describe how hot, humid weather feels to the average person. The humidex combines the temperature and humidity into one number to reflect the perceived temperature. Because it takes into account the two most important factors that affect summer comfort, it can be a better measure of how stifling the air feels than either temperature or humidity alone.

The humidex is widely used in Canada. However, extremely high readings are rare except in the southern regions of Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. Generally, the humidex decreases as latitude increases. Of all Canadian cities, Windsor, Ontario has had the highest recorded humidex measurement: 52.1 Celsius on June 20, 1953. The hot, humid air masses which cause such uncomfortable weather usually originate in the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean.

Guide to summer comfort

Range of humidex: Degree of comfort

- Less than 29 Celsius: No discomfort
- 30 to 39 Celsius: Some discomfort
- 40 to 45 Celsius: Great discomfort; avoid exertion
- Above 45 Celsius: Dangerous
- Above 54 Celsius: Heat stroke imminent

An extremely high humidex reading can be defined as one that is over 40 Celsius. In such conditions, all unnecessary activity should be curtailed. If the reading is in the mid to high 30s, then certain types of outdoor exercise should be toned down or modified, depending on the age and health of the individual, physical shape, the type of clothes worn, and other weather conditions.

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UV Index

INTERPRETATION OF THE UV INDEX:

The UV index is included in Environment Canada's weather forecasts whenever it is expected to reach 3 (moderate category) or more. This table outlines the sun protection actions recommended at different levels of the UV index. Remember that the amount of UV you receive depends on both the strength of the sun's rays (UV Index) and the amount of time you spend in the sun.

What does UV Index mean?		
UV Index	Category	Sun Protection Actions <i>(in detail)</i>
0 - 2	Low	Minimal protection for normal activity
3 - 5	Moderate	Cover up. Wear hat, sunglasses, sunscreen if outside for 30 min.
6 - 7	High	Protection required. Reduce time in sun between 11AM and 4PM
8 - 10	Very High	Take full precautions and avoid sun between 11AM and 4PM
11+	Extreme	Take full precautions and avoid sun between 11AM and 4PM

Proper sun protection includes wearing a broad-rimmed hat, a shirt with long sleeves and wrap-around sunglasses or ones with side shields. Choose sunscreen with 15+ SPF (sun protection factor) that offers protection against both UV-A and UV-B rays. Apply generously before going outside and reapply often, especially after swimming or exercise.