



Extreme Weather Policy

THE KOORALBYN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Extreme Weather Policy

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that The Kooralbyn International School meets its duty of care requirements during extreme weather conditions.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students and volunteers at The Kooralbyn International School.

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

Principal

Policy

Rationale

These guidelines are provided in order to meet the following objectives in relation to extreme weather conditions particularly in the case of hot weather, but also in other circumstances such as severe storms, electrical storms or extremely cold conditions.

1. To provide guidelines so that duty of care responsibilities are acknowledged and addressed and to ensure that the School has acted responsibly in these circumstances.
2. To establish structures and procedures to assist staff members in making decisions efficiently.
3. To establish consistency of practice.

Policy

Hot weather

What is a heatwave?

Heatwave conditions are specifically when excessively high temperatures combine with high humidity levels and are sustained over a number of days. That means, although the predicted maximum temperature for a region may be in the mid-to-high 30s, unless this coincides with high humidity and lasts for a few days, it is considered 'hot' rather than a 'heatwave'.

People are most at risk during extreme heat conditions when the temperatures reach about 5 degrees Celsius above the average for sustained periods of time.

The Bureau of Meteorology provides a [Heatwave Service for Australia](#) with heatwave forecasts and heatwave assessments. This service is a set of maps showing colour-coded heatwave severity for the previous two three-day periods, and the next five three-day periods.

What are heat-related conditions?

Heat-related conditions cover a wide range of symptoms ranging from swelling of hands and feet, prickly heat occurring in acclimatised people and heat cramps, through to heat exhaustion, to the more severe and potentially fatal heat stroke.

Further information is available from the [Queensland Government website](#).

Are animals affected by heatwaves?

Yes. Animals can also be affected by heat-related illness. Animals in the care of a school should be monitored and sufficient food, water and shelter provided to safeguard their welfare.

Strategies

Heat management planning:

- create infrastructure that reduces exposure to heat e.g. room ventilation, access to additional fans, shade provision (plant trees or build structures), source alternative venues for outdoor activities
- consider the provision of at least one priority area of the school with artificial cooling
- build staff and student awareness about the prevention, monitoring and identification of heat stress symptoms.
- consider suitable uniform options that incorporate UV protection and cooling fabrics.

Managing schools during excessive heat or heatwave conditions:

- modify or suspend normal school activities during excessive heat
- postpone any outdoor or sporting activities where appropriate
- increase access to the coolest areas of the school grounds or facilities for lessons or other activities
- ensure students with additional support needs are appropriately supervised, including the monitoring of their hydration

- utilise water spray bottles
- ensure school lunch boxes are stored in cool areas
- facilitate and encourage students to drink plenty of water and to stay out of the sun. Department of Health recommends that during hot weather, water (room temperature or slightly cool rather than very cold) is the best fluid to drink.
- undertake normal first aid procedures in the event of a student or staff member becoming heat stressed

Playing and exercising safely in hot weather

Factors to consider when **cancelling or postponing outdoor activities** include but are not limited to:

- the temperature - both ambient and relative humidity (local weather conditions can be checked on the Bureau of Meteorology website)
- 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
- fitness levels of participants

If the ambient temperature is between 31 and 35 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 50 per cent 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 30 minutes per session.

If the ambient temperature is over 36 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity is over 30 per cent, 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.

Other Weather Conditions

The Kooralbyn International School may issue a temporary closure of school where weather conditions across the metropolitan area are considered to be so extreme as to warrant such an action.

It is recognised that extreme weather conditions (hail, lightning, rain etc) could impact upon proceeding with safety.

Lightning/Thunderstorms

The following guidelines should be considered and followed;

Guidelines

- If the weather forecast is for possible thunderstorms/lightning, remain vigilant for approaching storms and/or changing or rapidly deteriorating conditions.

- If you see lightning apply the “30 – 30 Rule” Count the time from seeing lightning to when accompanying thunderclap is heard, if less than 30 seconds (storm is less than 10 kms away) go immediately to a safer place.
- Wait 30 minutes after the last thunderclap before continuing activity in an open area. Hearing thunder means that lightning is likely to be within striking range.

Heavy Rain/Hail/Wind Gusts

Heavy rain or hail is unlikely to present as a significant personal injury risk to participants. However, heavy rain or hail may leave a playing surface dangerous and therefore unplayable. The following guidelines should be followed:

Recommendations and Guidelines

- In the event of heavy rain or hail, if the conditions such as the safety of the playing surface or student welfare are deemed unsafe, then activities should initially be suspended.
- If the conditions improve i.e. rain stops or eases to what is considered a safe level and the playing surface can be cleared or has drained sufficiently to enable activities to recommence, activities should then be completed.
- This may also require a modification of existing rules regarding the durations of the activity.

Policy Release Details

Date of Policy

Reviewed- February 2020

Last Reviewed – January 2023

Approved by

Principal

Signature:

Date: July 2018

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Duty of Care Policy