

# WIND CHILL POLICY

## SECTION XI WIND CHILL PROCEDURES

1. Post-Season Contests: The Section XI Safety Chairman, in consultation with the Executive Director, will monitor *RealFeel* (wind chill) one hour prior to the start of a Section XI post-season contest and will alert member schools according to the NYSPHSAA Wind Chill Procedures.
2. Regular Season Contests or Practices: Member school districts must use the NYSPHSAA Wind Chill Procedures to determine if an alert or cancellation of events at their school is warranted.

## NYSPHSAA WIND CHILL PROCEDURES

### Administration of Wind Chill Policy:

1. Wind Chill will be checked 1 hour before the contest/practice by a certified athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee when the air temperature is 39 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower.

2. The athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee will use the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website to determine the wind chill index for the area of the contest/practice. The [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website can be reached through the NYSPHSAA website. Once a person is on the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website, they will put in the zip code for the location of the contest/practice and the website will give them the air temperature as well as the *RealFeel* temperature (wind chill).
3. If the *RealFeel* temperature (wind chill) is 10 degrees or below, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the *RealFeel* (wind chill) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the *RealFeel* (wind chill) temperature is -11 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower, the contest will be suspended.

Please refer to the following chart to take the appropriate actions:

	<i>RealFeel</i> (wind chill) above 40 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
<b>R E C O M M E N D E D</b>	<b>Wind Chill Caution:</b> <i>RealFeel</i> (wind chill) 36 degrees to 20 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold-related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing.
	<b>Wind Chill Watch:</b> <i>RealFeel</i> (wind chill) 19 degrees to 10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold-related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss.
	<b>Wind Chill Warning:</b> <i>RealFeel</i> (wind chill) 9 degrees to -10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold-related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss. Consider postponing practice to a time when <i>RealFeel</i> temperature is much higher. Reduce the amount of time for an outdoor practice session.
<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>Wind Chill Alert:</b> <i>RealFeel</i> (wind chill) -11 degrees or lower	No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held

From the NYC Department of Education Principals Weekly Post on this issue:

### **Guidelines for Outdoor Play in Cold Weather**

#### ***All schools***

Some schools continue to keep children inside when the temperature is below 32 degrees. This is not consistent with current Health Department recommendations or current DOE policy. Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Unless it is snowing or there is ice on the playground, low temperatures should not be a barrier to outside play, as long as children are appropriately dressed. The Health Department strongly encourages principals to maintain outdoor play periods on the vast majority of winter days. For additional information, contact Roger Platt, M.D.

## **Guidelines for Cold Weather Safety (continued)**

### **Wind-chill in the range of - 40°F should prompt consideration of:**

- Medical indication for school closure.
- Suspension of outdoor activity, including all interscholastic outdoor sports, even cold weather sports.

### **Transportation Considerations**

- To prevent added risk of exposure for bus breakdown, two buses should be immediately dispatched: one to pick up the children on the disabled bus, and a second to continue the run of the remaining children who may be standing outside. Back-up drivers should be available for emergencies. Drivers should be alerted to call for assistance if road conditions cause unusual delays.
- Districts that contract for services should have emergency back-up plans for service disruption.
- In districts where there is no transportation, extra attention to walking conditions is critical.

### **Considerations for Outdoor Activity in Extreme Cold**

- When wind chills are below 20°F, consider suspension of outdoor activities, including outdoor sports, physical education, clubs and playground/recess.
- If students go outside, staff should be aware of students who are not properly clothed, who become wet, or who report they are cold or feeling pain or numbness.  
**Exception:** Activities that are specific to cold weather, such as downhill or cross country skiing, may be scheduled as long as frequent warming breaks and adequate hydration occur and students are properly clothed and annually educated about the dangers associated with such temperature extremes.
- Administration should consult wind chill tables available through the National Weather Service at <http://www.weather.gov/os/windchill/index.shtml> to determine when conditions are too risky for safe outdoor activity. When using temperature and wind chill charts, the reference to the freezing of flesh is exposed flesh, not protected flesh.
- No student should be allowed to remain outdoors for an extended time at temperature extremes unless all body parts, especially those subject to frostbite are covered (feet, hands, ears, noses).

### **Considerations for Educating Staff, Students and Parents:**

Parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their children are properly clothed. However, weather conditions may change abruptly, leaving students vulnerable. Educational reminders for parents on websites, and via district and school newsletters, as well as education of students can be useful.

## Guidelines for Cold Weather Safety (continued)

### Topics to be addressed:

- Staff should be educated on the dangers of cold weather exposure and the importance of prompt response if symptoms of exposure listed below are reported. These students should be immediately referred for follow up to the school nurse if one is employed, or the administrator so that parents may be contacted if necessary.
- Students should be instructed to tell an adult if they are cold, feeling pain or numbness in their hands, feet, ears, or noses, or if they have wet clothing (especially boots or gloves) or if they see a color change in any part of their body. In these instances, the student should **see the school nurse to be warmed**, given dry clothing, and evaluated for frostbite.
- Parents should be reminded of the importance of providing appropriate outer wear every day during extreme weather conditions. This applies to both younger and older students.
- Parents should **avoid leaving a child completely unattended** before pick up and should discuss with the child what to do in an emergency or bus delay if the parent has already left for work. For instance, parents should arrange for a place for their children to go in the event the parent needs to leave a child before the scheduled bus arrival.
- Additional information is available on the Centers for Disease Control website at: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/>

## **Guidelines for Cold Weather Safety (continued)**

### **Sample Letter to Parents About Cold Weather Precautions**

Dear Parents:

At this time of year, it is a good idea to talk with your children about cold weather safety. Extra care is needed especially in younger children to be sure that frostbite does not occur.

- Make sure all children including teenagers have appropriate outerwear every day. Warm jackets, hats, scarves, boots, and an extra pair of gloves in their pockets will protect them during extremely cold temperatures.
- Develop an emergency plan and review it with your children in case you are not home either before or after school. If a bus is delayed, they need to know where, when, and how to get help. Tell your child that if you are not home while they are waiting outside for the bus, how long they may wait outside, where to go in the event the bus is delayed, and what the dangers and risks of extreme weather are.

Advise your child to seek help if they have:

- Wet clothing boots or gloves, snow or ice next to bare skin which cannot be removed.
- Pain or numbness or burning anywhere on their skin (especially hands, feet, ears, or nose).
- To wait longer than five minutes if temperatures have dipped into the teens, especially on a windy day.

Teach your child about:

- When to ask for help.
- Where to find safe shelter in an emergency
- Who is the designated adult to go to in your neighborhood
- How to protect themselves with proper winter clothing.
- The danger signs of frostbite.