



Policy for Outdoor Play in Cold Weather and on Air Pollution Action Days

Outdoor Play in Cold Weather

Nurse's Responsibilities:

- Monitor temperature and wind chill factor daily using the [Wind-Chill Factor Charts](#) to determine the current outdoor conditions.
 - **Comfortable (Green):** 30°F and above – regular outdoor activities permitted.
 - **Caution (Yellow):** 15°F to 30°F – Limited outdoor time with close observation.
 - **Danger (Red):** Below 15°F – Indoor activities only.
- Send email communication to faculty and staff if weather conditions fall into Yellow or Red zones on the [Child Care Weather Chart](#)
- During Planning Week, train faculty and staff in recognizing and responding to signs of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Partner with parents and guardians of students with a health condition that may be exacerbated by cold weather to create a school accommodations plan.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Check the temperature and wind chill factor using a weather app of their choice before sending their student to school.
- Ensure students have appropriate cold weather gear to cover as much exposed skin as possible, including coats, hats, gloves, and boots.
- Inform teachers and nurses if students have a health condition that may be exacerbated by cold weather and provide medical documentation that outlines school accommodations.

Teacher's Responsibilities:

- Check the temperature and wind chill factor using a weather app of their choice before allowing students outdoors.
- Check emails in a timely fashion for nursing communications regarding outdoor conditions.
- Ensure younger students are properly dressed before going outside.
- Reduce outdoor time as temperatures drop. For temperatures between 15°F and 30°F, limit outdoor exposure to 15–20 minutes.
- Actively monitor students for signs of cold stress, such as shivering, fatigue, or disorientation.
- Prepare for indoor recess when outdoor play is not possible.
- Teach students about cold weather safety and the importance of proper clothing.
- Inform parents about the school's cold weather policy and clothing requirements.



- Pay extra attention to students with health conditions that may be exacerbated by cold weather. Be prepared to make individual accommodations as necessary.
- Have a plan in place for quickly moving all students indoors if weather conditions suddenly worsen.

Administrator's Responsibilities:

- Support a collaborative environment.
- Identify faculty or parent concerns.
- Problem-solve and utilize available resources.
- Help identify alternative indoor play spaces when outdoor activities need to be moved indoors.

Outdoor Play on Air Pollution Action Days

In accordance with guidance from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Lab Schools will observe special protocols on Air Pollution Action Days for the protection of our community, especially those who are most sensitive to poor air quality.

Sensitive groups include:

- All children
- Adults who are active outdoors (including staff supervising outdoor activities)
- Individuals with lung disease (such as asthma) or heart disease

Nurse's Responsibilities:

- Monitor local air quality daily using [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov). An Air Pollution Action Day will be triggered when the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches or is forecast to reach "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" (Code Orange) level or higher in our area.
- Communicate to all faculty/staff when an Air Pollution Action Day is declared. Information about air quality alerts and forecasts will be provided through email and/or Google Chat.
- Be available for students with existing respiratory or heart conditions. Those experiencing breathing difficulties should report to the nurse immediately.
- Train faculty and staff to recognize symptoms of air pollution exposure (coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain).
- Partner with parents and guardians of students with a health condition that may be exacerbated by Air Pollution Action Day to create a school accommodations plan.

Teacher's Responsibilities:

- Sign up for free air quality forecasts and alerts through the [EnviroFlash program](#).



- It is recommended to download the free *AIRNow* app for real-time AQI data on iPhone and Android devices.
- When an Air Pollution Action Day is declared, follow the recommendations provided by the nurse. See table below:

Air Quality Index	Who Needs to be Concerned?	What Actions Should be Taken?
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101–150	Sensitive groups include people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children, and teenagers.	<p>Sensitive groups: Reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. It's OK to be active outside, but take more breaks and do less intense activities. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.</p> <p>People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick relief medicine (albuterol) handy.</p> <p>People with heart disease, symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue may indicate a serious problem. Contact a health provider if any of these symptoms are present.</p> <p>*Outdoor field trips and events may be postponed or moved inside at the discretion of the school administration and nursing team.</p>
Unhealthy 151–200	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: <i>Avoid</i> prolonged or heavy exertion. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when the air quality is better.</p> <p>Everyone else: <i>Reduce</i> prolonged or heavy exertion. <i>Take more breaks during all outdoor activities.</i></p> <p>*Outdoor field trips and events may be postponed or moved inside at the discretion of the school administration and nursing team.</p>



<p>Very unhealthy 201–300</p>	<p>Everyone</p>	<p>Sensitive groups: <i>Avoid all physical activities outdoors. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when the air quality is better.</i></p> <p>Everyone else: <i>Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when the air quality is better.</i></p> <p><i>*Outdoor field trips and events will be postponed or moved inside.</i></p>
<p>Hazardous 301–500</p>	<p>Everyone</p>	<p>Everyone: <i>Avoid all physical activities outdoors.</i></p> <p>Sensitive groups: <i>Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for keeping particle levels low indoors.</i></p> <p><i>*Outdoor field trips and events will be postponed or moved inside.</i></p>

Administrator’s Responsibilities:

- Support a collaborative environment.
- Identify faculty or parent concerns.
- Problem-solve and utilize available resources.
- Help identify alternative indoor play spaces when outdoor activities need to be moved indoors.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Sign up for free air quality forecasts and alerts through the [EnviroFlash program](#).
- It is recommended to download the free *AIRNow* app for real-time AQI data on iPhone and Android devices.
- Inform teachers and nurses if students have a health condition that may be exacerbated by Air Pollution Action Day and provide medical documentation that outlines school accommodations.
 - For students with asthma or reactive airway disease, provide up-to-date Emergency Action Plans and non-expired emergency medication (e.g. albuterol) to the nurses.
- Familiarize yourself with what actions will be taken on an Air Pollution Action Day based on AQI. Recognize that students may still go outside when AQI is in the Orange



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Zone (101–151) and consider making alternative arrangements for your student if you want them to stay indoors.