

ONTARIO-MONTCLAIR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Weather & Air Quality Guidelines for Families

Keeping students safe during extreme heat, poor air quality, and severe weather

At Ontario-Montclair School District, the safety and well-being of every student is our first priority. When extreme heat, wildfire smoke, or other severe weather could make outdoor time unsafe, our schools adjust, shorten, move, or cancel outdoor activities to protect students. This guide explains how those decisions are made, what to expect during different conditions, and how you can help keep your child safe and comfortable.

Conditions We Monitor

Our schools monitor for extreme heat, poor air quality from wildfire smoke, lightning and thunderstorms, heavy rain and flooding, high winds, and any watches or warnings issued by the National Weather Service.

Staff follow real-time, local information — including the National Weather Service, the NWS/CDPH HeatRisk index, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD). Decisions are based on the actual conditions at the time of an activity, not only the forecasted daily high. A day forecast to reach 100°F, for example, may be much cooler at morning recess, so activities can continue safely with water and shade.

How Decisions Are Made

Each school's principal (or designee) monitors conditions and makes the final decision for that campus. When weather affects many schools at once, the District Office issues a districtwide advisory and coordinates communication.

Along with temperature and air quality, staff also consider students' ages, humidity, how long and how intense an activity is, and the shade available. They keep in mind that playground equipment, blacktop, and concrete can become much hotter than the surrounding air.

Extreme Heat

During warm weather, our schools:

- Increase water breaks and encourage students to carry water bottles
- Provide frequent shade and rest breaks
- Reduce or shorten strenuous activity as temperatures rise
- Watch younger students, and any student with health concerns, more closely
- Increase adult supervision

Heat action levels

Temperature / HeatRisk	What happens at school
89°F or below HeatRisk: Green	Standard activities continue with regular hydration. Students who feel it is too hot are offered cooler, alternative options.
90°F – 94°F HeatRisk: Yellow or Orange	Limited outdoor activities. Water breaks are required every 30 minutes, followed by 5–10 minute breaks from activity. Shade is used whenever possible

Temperature / HeatRisk	What happens at school
	and staff watch closely for signs of overheating. Principals also weigh shade, breeze, humidity, and air quality, and may reduce directed physical activity.
95°F or higher HeatRisk: Red or Magenta	No outdoor activities. PE and outdoor activities that involve running, jumping, or prolonged sun are canceled, and lunch is held indoors or in shaded areas.

Some students are more sensitive to heat than others. If your child has a health condition, takes a medication affected by heat, or is especially sensitive to high temperatures, please let the school and the school nurse know so we can plan extra precautions.

Signs of heat illness

Staff watch for warning signs of heat illness and respond right away. These include dizziness, headache, fatigue, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, confusion, seizures, and flushed skin.

If a student shows these signs, staff move them to a cool, shaded, or air-conditioned space, begin cooling them, remove any gear and extra layers of clothing, offer small sips of water if the student is alert and able to drink, stay with them, and notify the office and school nurse. Families are contacted as soon as possible. Staff call 911 immediately if a student loses consciousness, becomes confused or acts unusually, has a seizure, stops sweating and has hot or red skin, has trouble breathing, or worsens quickly.

Air Quality Index (Wildfire Smoke)

When wildfire smoke or pollution affects the air, schools follow the Air Quality Index (AQI) reported by the South Coast AQMD or [AirNow](#). As air quality worsens, outdoor activity is limited and students move indoors.

Air Quality (AQI)	What it means	What we do
Green 0 – 50	Good	Normal outdoor activities.
Yellow 51 – 100	Moderate	Activities continue; students with asthma or breathing conditions are watched closely.
Orange 101 – 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Strenuous activity is reduced; sensitive students may move indoors or do alternative activities.
Red 151 – 200	Unhealthy	Strenuous outdoor activities are canceled or moved indoors; outdoor time is limited for everyone.
Purple 201 – 300	Very Unhealthy	All students stay indoors; outdoor activities, including PE, recess, and athletics, are canceled.
Maroon 301+	Hazardous	All outdoor activities are suspended; students and staff remain indoors.

No matter the AQI, staff take every report of feeling unwell seriously. Students may stop, rest, or come indoors any time they feel short of breath, dizzy, or otherwise not well. Students with asthma or other respiratory conditions receive additional care.

Lightning & Thunderstorms

Lightning is a serious, immediate danger. If thunder is heard or lightning is seen nearby, all outdoor activities stop and everyone moves inside a building — covered walkways, shade structures, and trees are not safe shelters. Outdoor activities resume 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning. If lunch or dismissal is affected, schools adjust so students are not waiting or walking outdoors during the threat.

Heavy Rain, Flooding & High Winds

During heavy rain, flooding, or high winds, schools check for standing water, slippery surfaces, poor visibility, falling branches, and flying debris. Outdoor activities are modified or moved indoors whenever conditions could be unsafe. When outdoor time is not possible, schools use indoor options such as the multipurpose room, library, classroom games, and movement activities.

How Families Can Help

- Send your child with a labeled, refillable water bottle.
- Dress for the weather: loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing; a hat, and sunscreen on hot days; layers and rain gear when it is cold or wet.
- Tell the school and the school nurse about any respiratory conditions such as asthma, heat sensitivity, or any health condition or medication affected by the weather.
- Remind your child to speak up and ask for water, shade, or rest whenever they do not feel well.
- Keep your contact information current so we can reach you quickly.

Resources for Families

You can check current conditions any time using these official resources:

National Weather Service — local forecasts, watches, and warnings for your area

<https://www.weather.gov/>

NWS HeatRisk — the daily heat-risk index (the Green-to-Magenta scale used in this guide)

<https://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/heatrisk/>

AirNow — real-time Air Quality Index by ZIP code, from the U.S. EPA

<https://www.airnow.gov/>

South Coast AQMD (Current Air Quality) — real-time local air quality index and neighborhood map

<https://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/current-air-quality-data>

South Coast AQMD (Smoke Advisories) — wildfire smoke advisories for the region

<https://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/air-quality-advisories>

Thank you for partnering with us to keep our students safe. If you have questions about these guidelines, please contact your school's front office.