Westside Union School District
Pointing the way, providing the path

Extreme Weather Guidelines

Recommendations and Guidelines for Preventing Heat Stress: Employees and Students

Rationale: With year-round school and the extreme heat of summer, especially in August and September, the students and staff are at higher risk for heat stress. Heat illnesses are preventable when necessary precautions are followed during hot weather.

Introduction: Heat illnesses (muscle cramps, heat exhaustion, heatstroke) are caused by *prolonged* exposure to hot temperatures, limited fluid intake or failure of the temperature regulation mechanisms in the brain. Without intervention and resolution of the problem, muscle cramps can lead to heat exhaustion, which can lead to heatstroke. Children, elderly, and obese people are at higher risk of developing heat illness.

Contributing causes:

Cardiovascular disease	Exercise: prolonged or excessive	High temperature or humidity
Dehydration	Lack of acclimatization	Drugs: alcohol, amphetamines
Excessive clothing	Chronic illnesses	Sweat gland dysfunction

Symptoms:

HEAT STRESS (Early symptoms):

- Fatigue, weakness
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Muscle cramps (caused by loss of salt from heavy sweating)
- Nausea
- Sweating: profuse
- Thirst
- Nosebleeds
- Headache

First aid:
Stop activity
Get in a cool place (shade, indoors)
Give cool water to drink
Remove excess clothing
Immerse in cool water/sponge down
Check victim's temperature
Notify parent/guardian as needed

HEAT EXHAUSTION (Later symptoms):

- Cool, moist, clammy, pale skin
- Extreme weakness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Pulse: rapid, weak
- Dilated pupils
- Irrational behavior
- Loss of consciousness, if not treated

First aid:
If school nurse not available, **call 911**
Lie down in cool place with feet elevated
Give water to drink, if conscious
Apply cool, wet cloths to body

HEAT STROKE (Medical EMERGENCY):

- Dry, hot, red skin
- Fever (body temperature above 104 degrees F)
- Extreme confusion
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Small (constricted) pupils
- Dark urine
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness
- Shock, brain damage, and death can occur

First aid:
Call 911 (Paramedics)
Notify school nurse & administrator
Cool body as directed above while awaiting Paramedics

General First Aid for Heat-Related Illnesses:

- Move the victim to a cool place**.**
- Have the victim lie down in a cool place: elevate feet about 12 inches.
- Loosen or remove excess clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths to the victim's skin, neck, groin, and armpits.
    - Do NOT apply rubbing alcohol.
    - Do NOT give the victim medications that are used to treat fever (such as aspirin).
- Give the victim fluids (water, Gatorade) to drink.
    - Do NOT give victim liquids that contain caffeine.
    - Do NOT give the victim salt tablets.
- Observe for symptoms of shock (bluish lips and fingernails, decreased alertness). Administer first aid for shock.
- If the victim has seizures, protect him/her from injury and give first aid.
- Notify parent/guardian, school nurse, and administrator.
- **CALL 911 (Paramedics): symptoms of heatstroke, unconsciousness, shock, seizures.**

Westside Union School District relies on a structured, multi-tiered framework established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) for extreme heat and inclement weather.

Westside Union School District sits in the Antelope Valley high-desert environment; site administrators at WUSD elementary and middle schools follow specific ambient temperature cutoffs, Heat Index calculations, and state CDPH HeatRisk levels to determine when to modify or restrict outdoor activities.

Weather Conditions requiring Modification of Physical Activities or the school schedule are:

1. Excessive Heat:
   Temperature 92-95 degrees F: limit duration & intensity of physical activity.
   Temperature ≥ 95 degrees F: prohibit or limit duration & intensity of P.E.; consider schedule change.

CDPH HeatRisk & Environmental Factors

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Heat-Risk-Grid.pdf

Per state and district health guidelines, site principals evaluate more than just the temperature gauge when deciding on outdoor safety:

- **CDPH HeatRisk Grid:** WUSD tracks the daily CDPH local heat risk level:
    - **Level 0 (Green - Low):** Normal activity.
    - **Level 1 (Yellow - Moderate):** Mandatory shade and hydration during outdoor breaks.
    - **Level 2 (Orange - High):** Limit outdoor physical activity duration for all students; shorten recess.
    - **Level 3 (Red - Very High):** Indoor schedule for all physical activity and recess.
    - **Level 4 (Magenta - Extreme):** Complete outdoor exposure ban.
- **Surface Heat:** On hot desert days, playground surfaces (blacktop asphalt, artificial turf, and rubber matting) reach temperatures significantly higher than the ambient air. School staff check surface temperatures before allowing play equipment or blacktop access.
- **Air Quality Index (AQI):** WUSD mandates that when AQI reaches **151 or higher** (Unhealthy), all outdoor PE and recess should be moved indoors regardless of ambient temperature.

Preventing Heat Stress (during Outdoor Activities):

- Students should wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing in hot weather.
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- Students should rest frequently when exercising in hot weather.

    - New students to the high desert may need a longer time to acclimate to the weather.
    - Limit duration and intensity of exercise.
- Prevent dehydration: encourage students to drink adequate fluids (water).
    - Do not wait until thirsty: drink water often.
    - Personal water containers: students should be allowed to carry their own.
    - In order to prevent the spread of disease, personal water containers should not be shared.
    - Students must obey safety rules when carrying personal water containers: no running with straws or containers in mouth, no using water containers inappropriately.
- Inclement weather schedules may be implemented at the discretion of the Administrator.
    - Use indoor facility (gymnasium, classroom, cafeteria – if available) for physical activities
    - Use hot days as P.E. instructional days
    - If exercising outdoors: limit intensity/duration of outdoor activity: i.e. walking instead of running.
- Sunscreen and hats/caps should be worn to prevent sunburn.
- Teachers and playground instructional aides must observe students during outdoor physical activity: know signs and symptoms of heat stress and emergency first aid. Students with known health problems should be closely monitored: modify/restrict activities as appropriate. Refer and consult with the School Nurse.

Employee Training:

School procedures for preventing and treating heat stress: reviewed by school nurse annually (during BBP inservice). Written information posted and given to all personnel: signs, symptoms, and first aid for heat stress. All personnel must be aware of contributing factors to heat stress:

- air temperature
- humidity
- air circulation
- air pollution
- medical problems
- fluid intake
- appropriate clothing
- physical conditioning
- acclimation to heat
- exercise: intensity and duration