

Inclement Weather Safety	
Adopted: November 28, 2005	Last Reviewed/Revised: May 12, 2014
Next Scheduled Review: 2019-2020	
Associated Policies & Procedures: N/A	

Purpose

To provide personnel in the Halton Catholic District School Board with information and guidelines regarding the safety of students and staff during various inclement weather situations and to ensure consistency among schools when school personnel are making decisions regarding student and staff safety during various inclement weather situations.

Application and Scope

This Administrative Procedure is meant to ensure the safety of all students and staff and applies to all schools and related events during various inclement weather situations that occur during the school day.

Principles

- The HCDSB is committed to taking every responsible precaution for the protection of all of its employees and students.
- The Education Act, S265, states that it is the duty of the Principal of a school to “give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of all pupils under their care”.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act, S25(2) (h) states that employers have a duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the worker.
- For the purposes of this administrative procedure, the following organizations have served as a resource and reference for various inclement weather situations regarding the safety of students and staff:

Environment Canada

HCDSB Risk Management checklist – temperature

Halton Regional Health Unit

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Energy

Halton Partners for Clean Air

Halton Conservation Authority

Health and Safety Ontario (HSO)
The National Weather Service – USA.

The range and types of inclement weather situations listed under the Requirements section of this administrative procedure do not supersede the duty and power of the Principal or designate of each school to make local decisions about the safety of students and staff regarding various inclement weather conditions.

It is recommended that where Principals or designates choose to make local decisions regarding the safety of students and staff during inclement weather conditions, that they err on the side of caution regarding each situation.

For the purpose of this administrative procedure, the following websites will be considered the primary sources of official information for all temperature related facts, i.e., heat, cold, humidex, chilldex, etc. when determining the need to make a decision regarding the safety of students and staff during a specific inclement weather situation: www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/canada_e.html or www.weathernetwork.ca.

Requirements

1. EXTREME COLD: TEMPERATURE WITH OR WITHOUT WINDCHILL

- a) warmer than -15°C: students may remain outside for all regular outside activities
- b) between -15° and -20°C: students may remain outside for no longer than 20 minute intervals at a time
- c) colder than -20°C: students must remain inside
- d) when the temperature or wind-chill reaches -20C (twenty degrees below zero, Celsius), students will be granted immediate entry to school upon arrival, and students will remain indoors during nutrition breaks. When temperatures thresholds are in effect, students are required to keep their outdoor coats/jackets with them throughout the instructional day, in case of a need to evacuate the school.

***Warnings and advisories issued by Halton Health Department at -20°C.*

2. EXTREME HEAT: TEMPERATURE WITH OR WITHOUT HUMIDEX

- a) cooler than 35°C: students may remain outside for all regular outside activities
- b) between 35° and 40°C: students may remain outside for no longer than 20 minute intervals at a time
- c) hotter than 40°C: students must remain inside

***Warnings and advisories issued by Halton Health Department at +35°.*

3. HEAT STRESS:

Definition of Heat Stress:

Working or playing where it is hot puts stress on your body's cooling system. When heat is combined with other stresses such as hard physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue or some medical conditions as well as humidity, it may lead to heat-related illness, disability and even death.

Environment Canada will issue "Humidex Advisories" when the maximum daily humidex is expected to be 40° or higher. If a humidex advisory is issued for our region, then the Halton Region Health Department will issue a "Heat Alert"

(<http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=13692>).

When warnings have been issued by Environment Canada, the principal or designate must take the necessary precautions to protect staff and students including precautions to prevent heat-stress related illnesses.

Refer to HSO – Health and Safety Guidelines – Heat Stress for further information

(http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/gl_heat.pdf Appendix 1).

Annually, during the spring, each schools' Health and Safety Committee will review the HSO – Health and Safety Guidelines – Heat Stress.

4. UV INDEX:

Parents are encouraged to take precautions with their children, i.e. protective clothing, eyewear, sunscreen, etc. when the UV Index is greater than 8.

5. SMOG ADVISORY/AIR QUALITY:

Smog Advisory alerts issued by the Ministry of Energy and Environment (Air Quality Index higher than 50) students remain outside no longer than 20 minute intervals at a time. Consideration should be made for asthmatic students and staff, etc.

6. THUNDERSTORM WATCH/WARNING/LIGHTNING STRIKES:

When warnings are issued by Environment Canada, the principal or designate must take the necessary precautions to protect staff and students.

When lightning is seen, thunder is heard, immediately suspend the activity/practice/game and direct student athletes and spectators (where applicable) to a safe shelter. This may also mean the cancellation of recess periods and/or delays in dismissals. The variable nature of these local weather conditions requires principals to use their discretion in protecting students and assigning supervisory staff when needed.

At all times the above Board's lightning procedures are the mandatory minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (e.g. trip guides, facility/program coordinators) the higher standard of care is to be followed.

The persons filling the roles of teacher/coach in charge at specific events or on field trips are responsible for making the decision to stopping the activity, directing the participants to safe shelter and determining when/if it is safe to resume the activity.

7. HIGH WATER WARNING/FLOOD ADVISORY:

When issued by the Halton Conservation Authority, inform the students and staff via the public address system the period of time the advisory is issued for.

8. TORNADO WARNING:

Refer to the individual school's Emergency Response Plan. See #5 above.

9. PRECIPITATION (rain, snow, freezing rain, etc.)

At the discretion of each Principal and related to local safety issues.

10. Specific information for each section under Requirements is available from School Services Department.