



# WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Heat Health Policy

### 1. BACKGROUND

Extreme heat or heatwave is a period of unusual and uncomfortable hot weather that can negatively affect health. Children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress therefore schools must be able to recognise and treat heat related illness and have strategies to manage prolonged periods of extreme heat.

### 2. PURPOSE

- To ensure schools have measures in place to prepare for and manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**School** means Williamstown Primary School.

### 4. PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

As principals and school leaders, we will ensure:

#### a) Community awareness of heat related illnesses

It is important that school staff know the signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to respond.

Some heat-related illnesses and common symptoms include:

- deterioration in existing medical conditions
- heat rash
- heat cramps - these include muscle pains or spasms
- dizziness and fainting
- heat exhaustion - warning signs may include paleness and sweating, rapid heart rate, muscle cramps headache, nausea and vomiting, dizziness or fainting.
- heatstroke - The person may stagger, appear confused, have a fit, collapse and become unconscious. This is a medical emergency and requires urgent attention.

Treatment options vary according to the type of heat-related illness. If a student, staff member or visitor shows any sign of heat exhaustion or heatstroke schools must apply first aid and seek medical assistance immediately.

#### b) Prevention

To minimise the risks associated with extreme hot weather schools must review and where practicable and appropriate implement the following strategies:

- ensure the schools emergency management plan risk assessment considers extreme heat and responses for power outage(s), transport delays and/or cancellation
- ensure adequate shade on school grounds from man-made structures (tents, sails and umbrellas) and/or trees.
- educate and encourage students and school staff to stay hydrated and display heat guidelines and charts in prominent locations in the school for reminders around hydration and symptoms.
- have water fountains located around the school premises
- review first aid kits and consider the inclusion of additional ice packs and hydrolytes

#### c) Preparedness

Williamstown Primary School will monitor outdoor weather conditions daily via the Bureau of Meteorology Weather App and subscribe to the Department of Health and Human Services Heat Health Alerts and the VicEmergency App.

During a period of extreme heat, the school will actively consider:

- utilising large industrial fans and /or ensuring indoor spaces have open doors and windows or air conditioning access during activities, especially during activity rest periods
- modifying or postponing any planned vigorous activity
- rescheduling/moving classes from classrooms with direct sunlight/no cooling.
- closing any internal and external blinds
- selecting suitable uniform options

- varying school hours by reducing midday recess to no less than thirty minutes and adjusting the dismissal time accordingly.

Note: Schools do not close at a certain temperature threshold during days of extreme heat; however, under emergency circumstances, schools may contact their regional director to consider appropriate actions.

**d) Communication**

Upon receiving advice of a Heat Health Alert, the school will:

- notify parents/carers about school heat conditions and remind them to provide their child with water and apply SPF 30 sunscreen
- include information on the school's heat protective procedures and processes in a school newsletter or communication
- brief staff to be extra vigilant during periods of prolonged heat.
- communicate of heat health messages to the community, including:
  - Drink water - even if you don't feel thirsty, drink water. Take a bottle with you always.
  - Hot cars kill - never leave children, adults or pets in hot cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes.
  - Keep cool - seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use a fan, take cool showers and dress in light and loose clothing made from natural fabrics.
  - Plan ahead - schedule activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat. If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen and take a bottle of water with you.
  - Help others - look after those most at risk in the heat – your neighbour living alone, the elderly, the young, people with a medical condition and don't forget your pets.

**References:**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- [Better Health Channel - Heat Stress and Heat Related Illness](#)
- [Health.vic - Extreme Heat and Heatwaves](#)
- [School Sport Victoria - Ultraviolet Radiation Exposure and Heat Illness Guidelines](#)
- [Sports Medicine Australia - Hot Weather](#)
- DET Policy - [Emergency Management Planning](#)
- DET Policy - [Health and Safety Considerations - Student Dress Code](#)
- DET Policy - [School Hours](#)
- DET Policy - [Sun and UV Protection](#)
- DET Policy - [Risk Management](#)

**5. REVIEW AND POLICY HISTORY**

This policy is due for formal review in February 2021 although it may be changed at any time as required after discussion with School Council and the Principal or if guidelines change.

**Policy History**

Version Approval Date	Summary of changes	VRQA Requirement	DET Mandated Policy	School Council Input
February 2020	New policy	No	No	Not required