

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION WEATHER GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to protect the health and safety of GCISD students and staff while providing and encouraging appropriate physical activities and opportunities. Acknowledging that local weather and environmental conditions are frequently at intense levels that may result in negative health consequences, GCISD employees shall take the following measures to protect student and staff health and safety.

Students need daily, vigorous exercise. It is not the intent of this policy that schools eliminate physical education or other outdoor programs during or after school, only that certain activities be limited or revised during those times when negative health or safety consequences are most likely to occur.

General Considerations for Risk Reduction

- Encourage proper education for all involved, i.e. athletes, coaches, parents, medical and non-medical staff, etc., regarding weather illnesses. Education on risk factors should focus on topics such as, but not limited to, acclimatization, work/rest ratio, signs and symptoms of illnesses, treatment, dietary supplements, nutritional issues, and fitness status.
- Assure that onsite medical staff have the authority to alter work/rest ratios, practice schedules, amount of equipment, and withdrawal of individuals from participation based on environment and athlete's medical condition.

Responsibility: GCISD Administrators, Campus Principals, School Nurses, and Coaches, Trainers, and Teachers.

STUDENT TRAVEL DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

Full-Day Cancellation of Classes: No travel is allowed unless approved by the athletic director and the campus principal

School Day Early Dismissal of Classes: No travel is allowed unless approved by the athletic director and the campus principal

All references to athletics shall also apply to marching bands.

HOT WEATHER

During times of excessive heat (when temperatures or the heat index is over 100 degrees), the following precautions will be taken for all outdoor physical activities including, but not limited to recess, athletic and physical education classes, and/or outdoor field trips.

- When possible, activities, practices, and games should not take place during the hottest hours of the afternoon, typically between 2:00 – 5:00 pm.

- Students should be hydrated prior to outdoor activities and drinking water shall be easily accessible.
- During extended periods of outdoor activity (>30-35 minutes), including athletics practices, periodic drinking breaks shall be required. **Under no circumstances will access to drinking water be used as punishment or motivation.**
- Students should not have recess or physical education classes outside when temperature or heat index exceeds 100 degrees. The campus administrator or designee will email or announce an activity advisory to all applicable staff.
- Athletics practices and games may take place when the temperature or heat index exceeds 100 degrees with drinking breaks at intervals not to exceed 20 minutes. Teams should not have more than one practice per day without express permission of the campus administrator or designee.
- Teachers are advised to use caution on other days when the temperature or heat index is high. Limiting recess to no more than 15 minutes and ensuring that students have access to adequate water prior to and/or after outside play is essential.

Practice and Competition in hot and humid conditions pose special problems for student athletes. Heat exposure and resulting heat illnesses can be life threatening and are the primary concern in these situations. Gradual acclimatization to hot/humid conditions is a must and should be done over a period of time. During acclimatization, clothing and protective gear can increase heat stress and interfere with the evaporation of sweat and other avenues of heat loss.

Heat Exposure and Recognition:

- Heat rash and cramps – cluster of red bumps often appearing on neck, chest and folds of skin and muscles pain or cramps usually in the abdomen, arms and legs
- Heat Stress/Heat Exhaustion- Cool, moist skin, heavy sweating, headache light-headedness or dizziness, nausea or vomiting, thirsty, irritable, and a fast heart rate.
- Heat Stroke/Medical Emergency – Dry, red skin or excessive sweating, confusion, seizures, very high body temperature.

To identify heat exposure conditions, regular measurements including ambient temperatures, relative humidity and heat Index should be taken before and through practices and competitions.

The **Heat Index** is the “feels like” or effective temperature. As relative humidity increases, the air seems warmer because the body is less able to cool itself via evaporation of perspiration. As the index rises, so do the health risks.

On school days when the temperature is anticipated to exceed 95°F, the campus administrator or designee will assess the anticipated Heat Index for the day and email or announce an activity advisory to all applicable staff. See Heat Index guidelines below.

Determining Heat Index

Temperature and humidity data may be obtained from, but not limited to, the following sources:

1. <http://www.weather.com>. Details specific to the school should be accessed as follows: Enter school zip code; select “hour-by-hour” tab (it is suggested that the site be bookmarked at this point for easy daily access); highest estimated temperature and humidity during school hours should be used to calculate Heat Index from chart below.
2. The National Weather Bureau will provide local forecast and advisories. Call - 817-429-2631, and then dial 511.

	AIR TEMPERATURE (DEGREES F)										
	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105	110	115	120
RELATIVE HUMIDITY	HEAT INDEX										
0%	64	69	73	78	83	87	91	95	99	103	107
10%	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105	111	116
20%	66	72	77	82	87	93	99	105	112	120	130
30%	67	73	78	84	90	96	104	113	123	135	148
40%	68	74	79	86	93	101	110	123	137	151	
50%	69	75	81	88	96	107	120	135	150		
60%	70	76	82	90	100	114	132	149			
70%	70	77	85	93	106	124	144				
80%	71	78	86	97	113	136	157				
90%	71	79	88	102	122	150	170				
100%	72	80	91	108	133	166					

Heat Specific Guidelines

HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL Athletics

Heat Index greater than 110:

Football

- Full Pads
 - Frequent water breaks, at least every 20 minutes
 - Break duration should be at least 5 minutes
- Shorts/shoulder pads/helmets
 - Frequent water breaks, at least every 30 minutes
 - Breaks should be at least 5 minutes
- Cardiovascular Conditioning: remove helmets
- Practice should not exceed 2 hours

Cross Country/Men's and Women's Track

- Frequent water breaks, or at least every 20 minutes
- Breaks should be at least 5 minutes
- Long distance runners must be directly supervised by coaches at all times.
- Practice should not exceed 2 hours.

Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Tennis

- Frequent water breaks, or at least every 30 minutes
- Practices should not exceed 2 hours.

Off Season Programs practicing during heat condition

- Heat exposure should not exceed 30 minutes total with at least 1 water break

Heat Index greater than 115:

Football

- Shorts/shirt/helmets ONLY
 - Frequent water breaks, at least every 20 minutes
 - Breaks should be at least 5 minutes
- NO Cardiovascular Conditioning
- Practice should not exceed 1-1/2 hours total

Cross Country/Men's and Women's Track

- Frequent water breaks, or at least every 15 minutes
- Breaks should be at least 5 minutes
- Long distance runners must be directly supervised by coaches at all times.
- Practice should not exceed 1-1/2 hours total

Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Tennis

- Frequent water breaks, or at least every 20 minutes
- Practices should not exceed 2 hours.

Off Season Programs practicing during heat condition

- Heat exposure should not exceed 30 minutes total with at least 1 water break

Heat Index greater than 118:

- No outside practice will be allowed

OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY

The following precautions will be taken for all outdoor physical activity including, but not limited to: recess, physical education classes, and/or outdoor field trips.

- Orange Ozone Alert Days (unhealthy for sensitive groups) - Students should not have outside recess or physical education classes for periods longer than 10-15 minutes. The campus administrator or designee will email or announce an activity advisory to all applicable staff.
- Red, Purple, Maroon Ozone Alert Days (unhealthy, very unhealthy and hazardous) - Students should not have recess or physical education classes outside or participate in athletics outside. The campus administrator or designee will email or announce an activity advisory to all applicable staff.

The **Air Quality Index** (AQI) provides local information on air quality and potential health concerns. The Director of Risk Management and/or Campus Administrator or designee will assess the anticipated AQI for the day and email or announce an activity advisory to all applicable staff.

Determining Air Quality Index

Local AQI can be obtained from:

1. www.tceq.state.tx.us/compliance/monitoring/air/monops/forecast_today.html
2. The National Weather Bureau will provide local forecast and advisories. Call - 817-429-2631, and then dial 511.

COLD WEATHER

During times of excessive cold weather (when temperatures or wind chill is below 45 degrees), the following precautions will be taken for all outdoor physical activity including, but not limited to: recess, athletic and physical education classes, and/or outdoor field trips.

- Teachers and coaching staffs should be aware of the wind chill factor and take appropriate precautions during cold weather.
- If a student does not have adequate warm clothing to participate in the outdoor activity, such clothing should be provided or the student excused from the activity.
- Students should not have recess or Physical Education classes outside when temperature or wind chill factor drops below 36 degrees.
- Elementary schools should limit outside recess to no more than 15 minutes if wind chill or temperatures fall below 45 degrees

Cold exposure can be uncomfortable, impair performance and even become life threatening. Conditions created by cold exposure include, but are not limited to, frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite is the freezing of superficial tissues, usually of the face, ears, fingers, and toes. Hypothermia a significant drop in body temperature occurs with rapid cooling, exhaustion and energy depletion. The resulting failure to the body's temperature-

regulating mechanisms constitutes a medical emergency.

Hypothermia frequently occurs at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 30-50 F degree exposure be as serious as a subzero exposure. Wind chill can make activity uncomfortable and can impair performance when muscle temperature declines. These Cold Weather guidelines use the wind chill factor instead of only the ambient temperature. See website for a wind chill factor chart.

www.mste.uiuc.edu/dildine/wind_chill

Wind speed interacts with ambient temperature to significantly increase body cooling. Clothing is one of the most important parts of keeping the athlete's body warm. Athletes should dress in layers, so clothing can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity, and wind chill, and try to stay as dry as possible. Athletes should use a wind block garment to avoid wind chill during workouts. Heat loss from the head and neck may be as much as 50% of total heat loss, therefore for the head and neck should be covered during cold conditions, as well as other extremities to protect from the wind chill.

Cold Exposure:

- Breathing of cold air can trigger an asthma attack (broncho spasm) or coughing, chest tightness, burning sensation in throat and nasal passage
- Reduction of strength, power, endurance, and aerobic capacity
- Core body temperature reduction, causing reduction of motor output

Cold Recognition:

- Shivering is a means for the body to generate heat
- Excessive shivering contributes to fatigue, loss of motor skills
- Numbness and pain in fingers, toes, ears, and exposed facial tissue
- Drop in core temperature; athlete exhibits sluggishness, slowed speech, disorientation

Cold Weather Specific Guidelines

HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL Athletics - Practices

When available, heaters should be utilized on sidelines

- Wind chill factor 32-45 degrees with precipitation
 - Athletes may be outside up to 35 minutes, then must return inside for a minimum of 20 minutes; this cycle may be repeated once
 - All athletes must be dress in dry, appropriate cold weather apparel with extremities covered
- Wind chill factor 32 degrees or under with precipitation
 - No outside practices
 - Inside workouts only
- Wind chill factor 26-32 degree without precipitation
 - Athletes may be outside up to 30 minutes, then must return inside for a minimum of 15 minutes; this cycle may be repeated once
 - All athletes must dress in dry, appropriate cold weather apparel with

extremities covered

- Wind chill factor of 25 degrees or under without precipitation
 - No outside practices
 - Inside workouts only

Cold Weather in Games—High School

- The District Handbook (for the competitive district) should be consulted for specific policies
- The athletic director and principal will consult regarding cancellations or delays

Cold Weather in Games—Middle School

The athletic director and principal will consult regarding cancellations or delays

Determining cold weather conditions:

Temperature and humidity data may be obtained from

1. <http://www.weather.com>. Details specific to the school should be accessed as follows: Enter school zip code; select “hour-by-hour” tab (it is suggested that the site be bookmarked at this point for easy daily access); the lowest estimated temperature and “feels like temperature” during school hours should be used to calculate the wind chill factor.
2. The National Weather Bureau will provide local forecast and advisories. Call - 817-429-2631, and then dial 511.

LIGHTNING AND THUNDERSTORMS

The following precautions will be taken for all outdoor physical activity including, but not limited to: recess, athletics/physical education classes, and/or outdoor field trips.

Lightning - A study on lightning found that the average distance between one lightning strike hitting the ground and the next was two to three miles. It does not need to be raining for lightning to strike.

Outside recesses, practice, games and any other events should not take place if lightning is seen, thunder is heard, or if detected by lightning detection systems or other technology.

- In physical education or athletic events and practices, when available, the lightning prediction system alarm must be heeded in all circumstances.
- Outdoor activity can resume when the storm has passed and lightning has not been seen nor thunder heard for at least 30 minutes. If the system again sounds the alarm participants again must wait another 30 minutes. If after 60 minutes, the lightning activity has not ended the outdoor event should be canceled.

References:

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