

Extreme Weather Conditions Policy

Rationale

Schools have a duty of care towards staff and students at all times. This duty of care includes protection against extreme weather conditions, including prolonged heat, high UV exposure, storms, strong winds, and poor air quality. The school also has a responsibility under the Child Safe Standards to protect all students from harm in their care.

Children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress and dehydration, therefore schools must be able to recognise, prevent and respond to heat-related illness and have clear strategies to manage prolonged periods of extreme heat and other severe weather conditions.

This policy aligns with the Department of Education's Heat Health Policy and the Department of Health's Extreme Heat and Heatwave Guidelines to ensure a safe, healthy, and responsive school environment.

Aims

- To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors during periods of extreme heat, high UV exposure, storms or adverse weather.
- To implement a consistent and proactive management strategy that addresses all extreme weather circumstances.
- To ensure staff and students are aware of early warning systems (such as Heat Health Alerts, UV forecasts, air quality and storm warnings) and take timely, protective action.
- To promote safe practices that reduce heat-related risks, including hydration, shade, indoor comfort, and reduced exposure.

Implementation

- On days of extreme heat, high winds, poor air quality, or threatening weather, all students will be kept indoors. This decision will be made by the Principal in consultation with the Leadership Team, using information from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Department of Health Heat Health Alerts, and DET IRIS warnings.
- The predicted UV rating can be found on the [Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency](#) (ARPANSA Realtime UV Index). The ambient temperature and UV rating will be used to determine the level of risk to students. UV ratings of 6-7 is high, 8-10 (very high) and 11 above is considered extreme.
- The SunSmart policy should be invoked in terms one and four.
- When extreme weather is forecast prior to recess or lunch, Sub-School Leaders or the OHS Safe And Well Leader will advise staff to follow the Extreme Weather Timetable until further notice. Teachers will share supervision of the classrooms, or other alternate play area, as agreed by their individual sub school.
- All staff and students are expected to wear hats when outdoors during times when the UV level is above 3 and always in Term 1 and 4.

- Staff should monitor classroom temperature and ventilation. If classrooms become excessively hot (e.g., above 30 °C with limited airflow), students should be relocated to a cooler or air-conditioned area. Fans and air-conditioning systems should be maintained in good working order before summer. Staff should model and encourage safe cooling strategies (light clothing, hydration, cool packs if needed).
- To limit sun exposure on days when the UV index levels are forecast to reach 3 or above, all students participating in outdoor activities (excursions/camps/PE) must wear hats, sunscreen and, where possible, long sleeves to avoid sunburn.
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher, broad-spectrum) must be applied before outdoor activities and reapplied every 2 hours. Parents/carers are encouraged to apply sunscreen before school and may provide individual sunscreen. The school will also provide a sensitive-skin sunscreen for reapplication.
- Hydration breaks should be scheduled regularly; students should have ready access to cool drinking water. IRIS warnings and alerts issued by DET, advise of known extreme weather predictions and should be considered and risk assessment made prior to leaving the school.
- For vulnerable students (e.g. medical conditions, sensory sensitivities, or those on medication affecting heat tolerance), staff should follow individual Health Support Plans.
- Scheduled sport, physical education or other outside activities will need to be rescheduled or alternatively organised during times of extreme weather.
- Excursions may also need to be rescheduled if the risk assessment of travelling conditions change or become hazardous e.g. travelling to or in a bushfire or flood zone and /or the venue has no suitable protection from the weather.
- As a guide we would expect staff to reschedule excursions if forecasted temperatures are predicted to be 35 degrees or above, or if a short excursion for students to be back from the excursion before temperatures are predicted to reach 35 degrees Celsius. A lower temperature with a high UV level expectation could also trigger a rescheduling of excursions depending on the age of the students.
- On designated Code Red Bushfire Danger days, the school will still operate as it is not in a high risk zone; however, any school bus which goes through a code red area will be cancelled in full, no routes will be shortened, modified or re-routed. Generally, schools would be given three days warning of such events.

References

- [Sun and UV protection:](#)
- [DET Emergency and Natural Disasters website:](#)
- [DET Heat Health Policy](#)



Resources

- Jacana School for Autism SunSmart policy
- SunSmart website:
 - [Live UV Alert measurement](#)
 - [Protect Your Skin](#)
- [Sunscreen application tool](#)
- [Melbourne Realtime UV Index Data](#):

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year policy review cycle.

Ratified at School Council	30 th October 2025
Review Date	Term 3, 2028