

Heat Advisory Guidelines for Physical Education & Recess

Time spent outdoors is an important part of the school day. Children should be exposed to fresh air and exercise. Time spent outdoors allows students an opportunity to engage in activities that allow them to relax from the structure of the classroom for a short while. There are times when it is unsafe for students to be outdoors. Below are guidelines for school recess, other outdoor physical activity or physical education classes should be modified.

Each school is to determine the criteria for such decisions and who makes the judgement call on a day-to-day basis. The decision may vary from grade to grade.

Conditions that should be considered:

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Heat Index
- Age of Students
- Length of time outdoors
- Appropriate clothing of the children
- Condition of the playground

Recess & Outdoor Physical Activity

1. On school days, when the outside temperatures reach a 95 degree heat index or above, Administrators should reconsider outside student recess and or provide appropriate shade and water breaks.
2. Teachers should provide students a water break before and after recess. Also, students showing signs of heat exhaustion or overheating should be allowed a water break during the recess period.
3. Teachers should be aware of medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy (seizure), allergy, medications, etc. making students a higher risk for heat related illness. Students with these conditions are at higher risk of experiencing these in hot weather; however, there is no reason to limit that students' participation, unless there is a non risk or the parent has advised the school that their child should not participate.

Physical Education Classes

1. Physical Education classes in un-air conditioned gyms should be monitored to prevent heat related injury.
2. When the heat index reaches 90 degrees in a non air conditioned gym, physical activity and instruction time should be modified and students should have frequent water breaks to avoid overheating and dehydration.
3. When the heat index is in the mid to upper 90's in a non air conditioned gym, then PE classes should be moved to an air conditioned area in the school and alternative physical activities should be conducted.
4. Students should be provided frequent water breaks when moderate to vigorous physical activity is taking place in the gym during any time of the year to prevent overexertion and dehydration.
5. Teachers should be aware of medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy(seizure), allergy, medications, etc. which puts students at a high risk of heat illness. These conditions could be intensified if exercising in hot weather; however, there is no reason to limit students' participation, unless a known risk is obvious or the parent has advised the school that their child should not participate.

*We understand that COVID-19 presents a fine balance between safe play outdoors and safety to reduce spread of COVID-19. Please keep this in mind and balance breaks, shade and hydration with outside play when the heat index is high.