



PICKERING BROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL

A school community growing together since 1915

HOT WEATHER PLAN

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. For this reason, we must be able to recognise and respond to heat related illness and have strategies to manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather and heat wave.

Being Prepared

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

Some heat-related illnesses and common symptoms include:

- deterioration in existing medical conditions
- heat stress – including dehydration, heat rash and heat cramps (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.

For more information please refer to the Healthy WA Website: [Heatwaves – be prepared for extreme heat \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au).

DURING A PERIOD OF EXTREME HEAT ADMIN WILL ACTIVELY:

- Notify parents/carers about upcoming weather conditions and remind them to provide their child with extra water, sunscreen, icepacks in lunch boxes.

Review and make adjustments to school operations:

- Review timetabled activities and duty rosters prior to the commencement of the school day and modify any activity that could add to heat related illness of staff and students.
- Keep all students inside during break and eating times.
- Limit outside play and provide alternative inside activities during break times.
- Review and modify duty rosters to limit staff exposure to heat.
- Postpone any planned vigorous activity.
- Modify physical education lessons and not undertake them outside.
- Postpone athletics and swimming carnivals.
- Allow drink bottles in classrooms, including the provision of additional water bottles.
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In-term swimming/excursions:

During a period of extreme heat, the principal will make an assessment on whether in-term swimming or an excursion will go ahead. This will be based on:

- The availability of sufficient shade
- The temperature at the location
- Duration of the lesson/excursion outdoors
- The time of day
- The age of the students

Adjustments to the physical space

During a period of extreme heat where there may be times the following adjustments may be necessary:

- Close any internal and external blinds.
- Use portable shade structures where possible.
- Utilise large industrial fans and ensure indoor spaces have open doors and windows or air conditioning during activities.
- Use fans or other devices (wet flannels) in an appropriate way to remain cool.
- Provide temporary water fountains around the school premises or sufficient water supplies in the case of a power outage and loss of reticulated water supply.

At Pickering Brook Primary School, we will:

- Display heat guidelines and charts in prominent locations in the school for reminders about hydration and symptoms.
- Educate and encourage students and school staff to stay hydrated.
- Conduct briefings to staff on the identification of symptoms and responses to heat related illness and the provision of first aid.
- Conduct walk-throughs and check-ins with staff and students to monitor impact of heat.
- Review first aid kits and consider the inclusion of additional ice packs and hydrolytes.
- Provide sunscreen.
- Review students with known medical conditions and triage support for those more likely to be impacted by the heat.
- In consultation with staff who work outside (e.g., gardeners/physical education teachers), reallocate their duties.

Responding

In the event of a disruption to essential services during extreme heat, we will:

- Report the fault to the Department of Finance Maintenance service centre on 13 21 34
- Report to Capital Works and Maintenance on 9264 4212
- Notify the regional office director of education.

Power Reduction Strategies

During times of high heat where we may need to reduce the power load, we may have to consider:

- Raising the temperature that the air conditioner is attempting to cool the room will reduce the power draw. Air conditioners installed following the Department's school design documents (Primary School Brief/Secondary School Planning Guidelines) should be preset to only allow the temperature to be varied from 21-23°C. In this case, raise the temperature to 23°C. If possible, raising the temperature higher (e.g., to 26°C) will further reduce power draw.
- Evaporative coolers are less effective in high humidity and at high temperatures (typically above 38°C). For improved efficiency, ensure windows are slightly open to push out hot air.
- Using fans instead of air conditioners.
- Change to fan only mode and consider using pedestal or ceiling fans if available.
- Stagger air conditioner use: Use of air conditioners could be staggered around different areas of the school to reduce the power draw at any one time.

Consider turning off non-essential electrical equipment.

This should be considered on a case-by-case basis but may include:

- preferencing paper-based work to reduce use of computers
- turning off unused/non-essential computers
- turning off fridges that are not currently being used
- turning off electric resistive hot water units if non-essential
- turning off any non-essential pool heat pumps if present
- preferencing theory lessons classes in place of cooking, technology