

Shelby County Schools

Coordinated School Health

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. However, there are times when it is not safe for students to be outside. Please use the guidelines below as a guide for when 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 will make the judgment call on a day-to-day basis. The decision making process may vary from grade to grade.

Conditions that should be considered in the determination:

Temperature
Humidity
Heat index
Age of Students
Length of time outdoors
Adequacy of clothing of the children
Condition of the playground

Recess & Outdoor Physical Activity

1. When the temperature index reaches 95 degrees or above, Principals should reconsider outside student recess and provide for an inside physical activity in an air-conditioned environment.
2. Teachers should provide students a water break before and after recess. Additionally, any student who shows 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. 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.

Physical Education Classes

1. Physical Education Classes in un-air conditioned gymnasiums should be monitored to prevent heat related injury.
2. When the heat index reaches 90 degrees in un-air conditioned gymnasiums, physical activities and instruction should be modified in duration and frequent water breaks should be provided to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion.
3. When the heat index is in the mid to upper 90's, in un- air conditioned gymnasiums, then physical education classes should be moved to an air-conditioned area in the school and alternative physical education activities 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 over-exertion 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.

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Cold Weather Advisory Guidelines for Physical Education & Recess

Time spent outdoors is an important part of the school day. It is difficult to set guidelines that fit every circumstance and condition in regards to outside activities during cold weather. Principals are advised to use their discretion and good judgment as to whether or not students will go outside, as well as, the duration of the outside activity. 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. However, there are times when it is not safe for students to be outside. Please use the guidelines below as a guide for when 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 will make the judgment call on a day-to-day basis. The decision making process may vary from grade to grade.

Conditions that should be considered in the determination:

Temperature
Wind Chill
Age of Students
Length of time outdoors
Adequacy of clothing of the children
Condition of the playground

Recess & Outdoor Physical Activity

1. When properly clothed, elementary school-aged children can participate in safe, vigorous play in an outdoor environment in most weather conditions. Increased caution should be practiced when temperatures reach below 40 degrees including the *wind chill* factor.
2. When temperature and wind chill falls below 35 degrees including the wind chill, students are kept indoors.
3. Each year students and parents should be informed of the school's cold weather guidelines, along with reminders about the necessity of wearing appropriate clothing for cold weather activities.
4. Temperature considerations and proper clothing:
 - a. Below 60 degrees jacket or long sleeves recommended
 - b. Below 50 degrees coat and long pants recommended
 - c. Below 40 degrees gloves and hats with previously recommended gear necessary
 - d. Below 35 degrees indoor recess or physical activity
5. Schools should honor reasonable parent requests that a student be allowed to stay indoors. Requests based on health reasons must be honored.
 - a. Particularly asthmatic children may need special accommodation of their needs during cold weather. The parent and school must work to determine a workable system for when the child should not participate in outdoor activities due to health.
6. If a student's medical condition requires further consideration due to weather conditions, or if you have other questions or concerns about how and when weather conditions affect your students, please call 901-321-2693.

Note: A Wind Chill Temperature of -25 or colder can freeze exposed flesh.