



GINGIN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

Gingin District High School defines extreme weather conditions as: **excessive and/or prolonged heat OR severe, wet and/or stormy weather.**

There is no specific temperature at which the Department of Education will close a school. Based on bushfire assessment completed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), the school would likely be closed if the fire danger rating reached '*Catastrophic*'. The only person who has the authority to close the school is the Director General.

In the event of extreme weather conditions, the Leadership team will determine any modifications to timetabled student activities as well as enabling access to different rooms or duty areas of the school during the lunch breaks.

Adjustments to School Operations and Physical Spaces

Depending on the severity of the weather forecast, the following adjustments will be enacted:

- Planned activities that could add to heat related illness of staff and students will be modified or substituted and in some cases, postponed or cancelled.
- Sporting carnivals or events that require physical exertion may be cancelled if the temperature forecast two days prior exceeds 38 degrees. This includes camps, hikes, some excursions, etc . Factors that will impact on the decision include humidity, daily forecast temperature profile and access to shade or other ameliorating provisions. The decision will be taken on advice from the Department of Education. The Principal's decision will be final.
- Outdoor courts and unshaded areas will be closed and deemed 'Out of Bounds' if the forecast temperature for the day exceeds 38 degrees. Duty teachers will be redeployed to indoor areas to supervise students.
- When the forecast daily temperature exceeds 38 degrees, classrooms will be open provide alternative areas for students.
- Where the forecast for rain is for an excess of 10 mm during a lunch or recess break, outdoor areas may be closed and classrooms opened for students.
- Outdoor excursions or Sports Carnivals may be cancelled if the forecast is for substantial rain, defined as more that 10 mm per hour for more than one hour during the carnival, based on expected impact on events.
- Outdoor excursions, sports carnivals, camps or other activities will be cancelled if the school deems a significant risk from lightning strikes and thunderstorms is present.

First Aid and Health Education

- Sunscreen will be made available in all classrooms, front office and staff offices.
- The list of students with known medical conditions more likely to be impacted by the heat will be distributed to staff and identified.
- Staff are required to remind students to stay hydrated and be aware of the symptoms of heat stress and where to go to get support.
- Students should have opportunity to drink from their water bottle during class if they wish.
- Students should bring lunch boxes inside classrooms at the start of the day if the forecast temperature exceeds 32 degrees.
- Staff who work outside (gardeners, PE teachers, duty teacher etc.) should ensure they follow Sun Smart guidelines, including appropriate school Sun smart hats, sunscreen use (SPF 30+) and have adequate hydration. Staff should select duties indoors when the weather is extreme.
- Staff should consider wearing light clothing and footwear during hot weather.

- Staff and students should wear waterproof clothing in the event of forecast rain.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stress

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, our school will apply first aid and seek medical assistance if required.

For more information please refer to the **Healthy WA** Website: Heatwaves – be prepared for extreme heat (healthywa.wa.gov.au)