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## Extreme Weather Policy

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### HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Chelsea Primary School on 03 9773 2055 or [chelsea.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:chelsea.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

### PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for managing extreme weather conditions. **Extreme weather** refers to conditions that are significantly cold, hot, wet, or windy, or may otherwise pose safety risks.

This policy aims to ensure a safe and healthy school environment that considers the needs of all students, staff, and visitors, including those with pre-existing health conditions.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Staff should stay alert to changing weather conditions during breaks and outdoor activities, both at school and during off-site events.

An **Extreme Weather Timetable** may be implemented in the event of, but not limited to, **rain, storms, high winds, or heat exceeding 35°C**, as reported by the local **Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)**. The Principal, Assistant Principal, or a nominated staff member will determine when an Extreme Weather Timetable is necessary. On days of impending extreme weather, the nominated staff member may decide to:

- Shorten recess or lunch breaks that involve outdoor play.
- Implement an Extreme Weather Timetable for recess, lunch, or for the entire school day as required.

The decision will be based on current weather conditions and information provided by the Department of Meteorology. It will be continuously monitored, and if conditions change, the decision will be updated and staff will be informed.

An extreme weather timetable will be prepared and teachers will organise appropriate indoor activities for students in their classrooms. Duty staff will then supervise. All teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of and implement their duty of care during extreme weather timetables.

When planning outdoor activities, staff will make allowances for extreme weather conditions based on predicted weather conditions.

Students and staff must follow the **SunSmart** guidelines of wearing an approved hat when outdoors (September 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>, and whenever **UV levels** reach 3 and above), are encouraged to supply and apply their own sunscreen (SPF 50+ recommended) and stay adequately hydrated. No singlets are to be worn on free dress days, excursions or camps. On days of impending extreme hot weather, students are advised to use the shaded areas of the playground and to drink water on a regular basis.

Staff responsible for Physical Education and Sport are to exercise professional judgment in determining the type and

location of activities during periods of extreme or impending extreme weather. During scheduled sports and athletics events, such as Interschool Sports or the annual Athletics Day, decisions will be made to modify, postpone, or cancel the event if extreme weather conditions are forecast.

### **Shade and Shelter Provision**

Chelsea Primary School ensures that sufficient shade and shelter options are available throughout the school grounds to promote student comfort and safety. Shade is provided through both natural and built structures in key areas where students gather, including:

- Areas where students congregate for lunch
- Outdoor learning and lesson spaces
- Popular play areas
- Assembly areas
- Sporting grounds

The school is committed to maintaining and enhancing these shaded and sheltered spaces to support student wellbeing and sun safety.

Students are encouraged to make use of available shaded areas when outdoors during peak sun protection times, particularly if they are not wearing appropriate hats or outdoor clothing. When the UV Index is 3 or above, families and visitors participating in or attending outdoor school activities are also encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures, such as wearing hats, sunscreen, and protective clothing, and seeking shade where possible.

### **Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma:**

Chelsea Primary School will be prepared to act on the advice and alerts issued by the Department's Emergency Management Division when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as *high*. The school will:

- inform and update the school community of the forecast and any required actions.
- implement procedures to minimise exposure, including keeping students and staff indoors with windows and doors closed when possible.
- ensure that staff follow individual asthma action plans and provide appropriate support to affected students and staff as required.

Further information can be found at [Better Health Channel – Thunderstorm Asthma](#)

### **Excursions:**

Staff must check weather forecasts and emergency warnings for the location in the days leading up to the excursion and on the day the excursion commences. Weather and warning forecasts should be obtained from the **Bureau of Meteorology**. If the activity extends overnight, staff must access weather forecasts and warnings daily and monitor and assess the weather throughout, and be prepared to cancel, modify or relocate at any time if a severe weather warning is issued for the area.

When planning excursions in bushfire prone areas or in areas surrounded by grassland, schools are advised to regularly monitor **forecast fire danger ratings** for that fire weather district. On days of forecasted Catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR), all excursions in that district will be cancelled.

In the days leading up to activities in or around bushfire prone areas, Chelsea Primary School will regularly check the forecast fire danger rating. If the forecast fire danger rating is identified as extreme, or a total fire ban has been declared, the excursion risk assessment will be reassessed and advice can be sought from regional emergency management staff about whether the excursion should be cancelled. If an excursion is not cancelled, alternative lower risk activities may be required, depending on the location.

The risk of bushfire or grassfire at excursion locations will be considered when conducting risk assessments. This can be guided by the department’s [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy](#).

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as an annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

The following **Department of Education** policies are relevant to this **Extreme Weather** Policy:

- [Sun Protection Policy](#)
- [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Asthma Policy](#)

The following **school** policies are also relevant to this **Extreme Weather** Policy:

- [SunSmart Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Asthma Policy](#)

Policy last reviewed	November 2025
Consultation	November 2025 School Council endorsement
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2027

