

Extreme Weather Policy



ST ANDREWS
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

INSPIRED BY
FAITH

DISTINGUISHED BY
CHARACTER

LEADERS BY
INFLUENCE



Extreme Weather Policy and Procedures

PREAMBLE

All policy, protocols and procedures flow from the St Andrews Christian College Mission Statement:

“To educate our students so that they are well skilled, understand life on the basis of biblical truth, and are motivated to walk with God and serve Him in their lives, so that they will be a positive Christian influence in the world.”

POLICY DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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| TITLE: | Extreme Weather Policy |
| AUTHORS: | S. Leslie T. Farmilo |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: | |
| PURPOSE: | To provide policy and direction for all the College Community. |
| RELATED DOCUMENTS: | Anti-Bullying Policy |

KEY DATES

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| ISSUE DATE: | March 2020 |
| REVIEW DATE: | 2023 |

1. RATIONALE

Extreme weather can present risks and hazards for students and members of staff, to the detriment of health and wellbeing. This policy seeks to define extreme weather and provide guidelines for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, and other visitors to the College. This policy falls under the general heading of risk management. Therefore, it is important to take weather conditions into consideration when planning activities, events or excursions. If extreme weather is forecast, then strategies should be put in place to ensure safety or plans may need to be modified.

2. DEFINITIONS

Extreme weather: includes weather conditions of:

- extreme cold – in this setting refers to temperatures below 0°C, or freezing point, or temperatures under 5°C with added wind-chill factor;
- extreme heat – in this setting, refers to temperatures in the shade of 35°C or above;
- heavy, consistent rain;
- extreme storm – high winds, lightning, hail, dust, or asthma-causing thunderstorms;
- Extreme fire danger (usually a combination of heat, prolonged dry conditions and wind);
- Extremely hazardous Air Quality: smoke haze or other air pollution.

3. PURPOSE

To ensure the health and well-being of students and staff on campus and in all off-campus locations.

To highlight the need to check weather forecasts as part of Risk Assessment when planning activities, events or excursions.

To authorise staff to make decisions to ensure health and safety on the day, if and when weather conditions change.

To provide guidelines and processes to accommodate extreme weather conditions and mitigate their impact on health and safety.

4. IMPLEMENTATION/PROCESS/PROCEDURES —

General Principles

1. All staff should be aware of impending weather conditions throughout scheduled breaks in the school day and the impact on all outdoor activities within and without the school grounds.
2. An Extreme Weather timetable or supervision arrangements will be called by the Principal or delegates – Deputy Principal, Heads of School section
3. The Principal or his/her delegate may determine, on days of extreme weather, to:
 - Shorten the recess or lunch breaks;
 - Keep students in classrooms or inside buildings during recess or lunch;
 - Modify room-change arrangements, if this involves exposure to extreme conditions;
 - Call an Extreme Weather timetable for the entire day, in the event of, but not limited to, heavy rain, heat above 35°C in the shade, high winds or thunderstorms, according the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) report;
 - Cancel events or activities outdoors where students are deemed to be at risk.
4. The Teacher-in-Charge of Sport, Physical Education classes, an excursion or other outside activity is authorised to make a decision on the viability of an activity, or the need to modify arrangements in the event of extreme weather.

Extreme Heat

St Andrews Christian College does not close because of hot weather, unless exceptional circumstances, such as a local power outage makes it unsafe for students to remain at school. Rooms are air-conditioned and safe places for children and staff.

If the temperature reaches 35°C or above by 10.55am (morning recess) or when a combination of heat and wind create hazardous conditions, the Principal or delegate will make an announcement that the Extreme Weather timetable is activated. This will mean:

- Students will remain in their class or home rooms for recess and lunch, except when permitted to use corridors or open spaces within buildings;
- The Extreme Weather Supervision Roster will be activated to ensure class and home room teachers get a break;
- Staff members will not be required to supervise outside during recess and lunch if the Extreme Weather timetable is activated. (NB End-of-day pick up supervision will have to occur, with every attempt to keep students out of direct sun whilst waiting for parents.);
- Maintenance and gardening staff will not be required to undertake outside manual work if the temperature is 35°C or above;
- Any classes or activities planned to run outside will be modified to take place inside;
- Keep windows closed and air conditioners on.



Wet Weather – Heavy or Consistent Rain

The Extreme Weather timetable can be activated if there is heavy or consistent rain at either morning recess (10:55am) or at lunch time (1:00pm), or if the grounds are deemed to be in an unsafe or hazardous condition.

The Principal or delegate will make an announcement that the Extreme Weather timetable is activated. This will mean:

- Students will remain in their class or home rooms for recess and lunch, except when permitted to use corridors or open spaces within buildings;
- The Extreme Weather Supervision Roster will be activated to ensure class and home room teachers get a break;
- If the rain clears during lunch time, an announcement may be made to revert to the normal timetable and students can be free to play outside on paved areas;
- Staff will not be required to patrol or supervise outside in heavy or consistent rain.

Storms – Wind; Dust; Hail; Thunder/Lightning;

The response to storm events is the same as for Wet Weather as defined above. College leadership will determine when or if to activate the Extreme Weather timetable based on the timing and severity of the event. Thunderstorms, with associated hail, heavy rain, high dust/pollen counts or lightning are significant risks and students should not be outside during such events.

Windows and doors should be closed. Great care must be exercised when opening external doors.

Monitor students who are known asthma sufferers, or who are anaphylactic.

Extreme Fire Danger

St Andrews Christian College is not in a designated bushfire-prone zone and will not be closed on days of Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger. College leadership will determine appropriate responses to fire danger.

Extreme Air Pollution

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regularly monitors the quality of air for Greater Melbourne. There are five categories of air quality: Good; Moderate; Poor; Very Poor; Hazardous. In most cases it is possible to visually observe Very Poor or Hazardous air quality. Teachers who are working outside should report to Administration if the air is hazy or there is a strong smell of woodfire or chemical smoke.

If the EPA classifies the air quality as Very Poor or Hazardous on its website, then this will trigger the Extreme Weather policy. This hazard is extremely dangerous to asthma sufferers or those with other kinds of respiratory issues. In this case, the Principal or delegate will make an announcement that the Extreme Weather timetable is activated. This will mean:

- Students will remain in their class or home rooms for recess and lunch, except when permitted to use corridors or open spaces within buildings;
- The Extreme Weather Supervision Roster will be activated to ensure class and home room teachers get a break;
- Doors and windows should be kept closed and air conditioning switched on.

5. NOTES

A. This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with the:

- SunSmart policy
- Emergency procedures for evacuation and lockdown
- Emergency Recovery Plan following a Natural Disaster