

# CPS Recess Weather Guidelines

Ideally, recess should take place outdoors on school grounds as weather, space and safety permit. Outdoor recess allows children to get fresh air, provides an opportunity for children to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity and gives students more activity options than most indoor spaces. Outdoor recess is an important part of a child's school day and schools are highly encouraged to provide students with the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Shifting completely to indoor recess starting in a particular month (e.g., November or December) and continue to conduct recess indoors, regardless of the weather conditions is not an acceptable practice. A school's plan for recess should provide contingencies for inclement weather; however, holding recess indoors should be a backup plan and should not be the norm for a school. Use the following guidelines provided by the district to determine whether recess is held indoors or outdoors each day:

## Cold Weather Guidelines

Weather	Recess Held
Above 32 °F with or without wind chill	Outdoors
15 F to 32 °F with or without wind chill	Principal Discretion
Below 15 °F with or without wind chill	Indoors

Schools should exercise the following precautionary measures if holding recess outdoors:

**Precipitation:** snow and icy conditions should be evaluated for student safety and attire

**Student preparedness:** students should have appropriate outdoor attire to stay warm and dry during recess

**Playground safety:** the playground equipment and surface (i.e., icy conditions) should be evaluated to determine whether students can safely play outdoors

\*\*\*"With or without wind chill" means how cold it feels, whether it is caused by wind chill or not. For example, if the straight temperature reading is 10 degrees or if it's 20 degrees with a wind chill of 10 degrees, recess should be held indoors.

### Cold Weather and the common cold?

The common cold is caused by a virus, not weather. While more people tend to get sick during the colder months, proximity (i.e., people spending more time indoors and closer together, allowing germs to spread from person to person more easily) is the reason for the increase. Students with asthma with or without a cold may experience more coughing and should follow the recommendations of their 504 plan.

### Proper Attire

Parents/guardians and principals should ensure that students are properly dressed for outdoor recess during all seasons. During the winter months, students should be reminded to wear coats, gloves (without strings), hats, and boots.

# CPS Recess Weather Guidelines Cont.

## Warm Weather Guidelines

Weather	Recess Held
Heat index of 90 °F or below	Outdoors
Heat index between 91 °F and 94 °F	Principal Discretion
Heat index above 95 °F	Indoors

\*Heat Index takes into account both air temperature and relative humidity.

Schools should exercise the following precautionary measures if holding recess outdoors:

**Activity level:** students should participate in only light to moderate physical activity

**Student preparedness:** students should wear appropriate attire during warm weather. It is recommended that students wear sunscreen when outdoors

**Playground equipment:** the playground equipment and surfaces should be checked prior to recess. Supervisors should ensure that students do not play on equipment that is extremely hot to the touch.

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**Water access:** students should have access to water before and/or after recess. Additionally, students who show any signs of heat exhaustion or heat-related illness (i.e., heavy sweating, weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, weak pulse, clammy skin, etc.) should be provided with immediate access to water.

### Other Warm Weather Days Considerations

All recess supervisors should be aware of medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, allergy and medications, especially on warm weather days, as medical conditions may put a student at a higher risk for heat illness. On warm weather days, schools should designate a shaded area as a cool down area for students who need a break from exposure or activity. Supervisors should also perform well-being checks by asking students how they feel; those feeling weak, dizzy or nauseous, sweating heavily, or experiencing cramps should get water and take a break in a cool down area.

### Proper Attire

When the forecast indicates that weather will be hot and/or humid, principals should remind students and their parents to hydrate properly and wear lightweight, light-colored clothing, proper shoes (no sandals or heeled shoes), and sunscreen.

# CPS Recess Weather Guidelines Cont.

Where to check? [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)



## ISBE Child Care Weather Watch

### Wind-Chill



- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed *skin will freeze* in 1 minute

### Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

		Wind Speed in mph								
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Air Temperature	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

■ Comfortable for out door play    
 ■ Caution    
 ■ Danger

		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Air Temperature (F)	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

## Air Quality Considerations

**High Ozone Days:** Please note that high ozone days are very dangerous, and schools should proceed with extreme caution on these days. High ozone days tend to be hot, muggy days. There are a number of health impacts to the general public, such as decrease in lung function and inflammation of airways with the symptoms of coughing, throat irritation, chest tightness, wheezing, shortness of breath, and pain and burning in the chest when taking a deep breath. People with asthma are known to be especially susceptible to the effects of ozone exposure; please check the Student Safety Document for more information about asthma management. Because the prevalence of asthma in children is particularly high and because children are generally at risk of higher exposures, they may be disproportionately affected by ozone exposure. Their chances of an asthma attack increase drastically on high ozone days. Go to the [EPA's Air Now website](http://www.epa.gov/airnow) to learn more about the air quality for the day and check out [this breakdown of the index](#)