Tenison Woods College

# HOT WEATHER POLICY

## Rationale

At Tenison Woods College we have a duty of care to staff, students and families. This duty of care includes supporting student/staff wellbeing during hot weather conditions, both inside and outside classrooms.

## Objective

This policy aims to support the wellbeing of students and staff during times of hot weather by consistently implementing a planned management strategy that will cater for all hot weather circumstances.

## Context

The College's commitment to providing air-conditioned learning environments has significantly reduced the impact of extreme weather conditions on the health and wellbeing of our community.

## Overview

***Junior School***

- All teachers are to encourage children to bring water into the classroom for hydration throughout the day – all year round. In summer, teachers are to encourage children to freeze their water bottles overnight.
- All students must wear school hats and sunscreen as per the SunSmart Policy. Sunscreen is available in all classrooms.
- Junior School excursions will not go ahead if the temperature and nature of the excursion could cause heat exhaustion. Each specific excursion will be assessed according to age of children, how much walking is involved, destination, duration and time of the excursion.
- The Junior School Sports Days (R-2; 3-6) will not be held if the forecast on the ABC news the evening before is over 34˚C.
- Junior School assemblies and school celebrations may be modified if the forecast temperature is 36˚C or over on the Bureau of Meteorology website.
- Children will be kept under shade during recess and lunch time if the temperature is 36˚C or higher and the oval and courts will be closed.

***Middle School/Senior School***

- All teachers are to encourage students to bring water bottles into their classrooms for hydration throughout the day – except in the Science Laboratories.
- All students must wear school hats and sunscreen as per the SunSmart Policy. Sunscreen is available in all classrooms.
- Students are encouraged to stay under shade during recess and lunch time if the temperature is 36˚C and above.
- The oval will be closed if the temperature is 36˚C or above.
- Adjust teaching and learning activities to suit the conditions.

## Extreme Hot Weather

Parents can collect their children at any time if they believe their child is suffering from the heat. Parents will follow the normal early collection processes and sign their child out through the Front Office/PRC office.

**NB. Requests and information from parents regarding early departure needs to be in the students' diary and viewed/noted by the Class/Home Group teacher to ensure accurate and timely communication and record keeping**

## Facility management

- Air-conditioned facilities may be used during recess and lunch times to enable students to minimise their exposure to the heat.
- Students that elect to be outdoors will be supervised in shaded areas. The oval ovals and courts will be closed.
- Associated policies: Camps and Excursions Procedures
  Bushfire Policy

**Medical Management**

***Heat Stress***

The risk of heat stress is increased in hot and humid weather because people may not be able to sweat enough for adequate cooling and high humidity may prevent adequate evaporation of sweat.

If left untreated, heat stress can lead to heat stroke which may be life threatening.

Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults. This means they have greater difficulty in getting rid of heat generated by activity. Heat stress signs may include them looking flushed or feeling hotter and more stressed than adults. Children are usually more effective at "listening to their bodies" and for this reason they should be allowed to exercise to their preferred intensity, without undue pressure. If they appear distressed or complain of feeling unwell they should stop exercising immediately.

*Symptoms of Heat Stress*

Heat stress can be shown by symptoms of:

- Light headedness, dizziness;
- Obvious loss of coordination/clumsiness or unsteadiness;
- Nausea;
- Fatigue;
- Cessation of sweating;
- Ashen, grey, pale skin;
- Confusion;
- Aggressive or irrational behaviour; and/or
- Altered consciousness or collapse.

*Factors that Increase the Risk of Heat Stress*

- High exercise intensity;
- Lack of fitness;
- Previous history of heat intolerance;
- Age;
- High air temperature and high humidity;
- Low air movement (no wind);
- Prolonged exposure to hot conditions;
- Heavy clothing/protective equipment;
- Dehydration; and/or
- Illness and medical conditions (current or recent infectious illness, chronic health disorders).

***Teaching Strategies to minimise the Risk of Heat Illness***

- Adjust teaching and learning activities to match the conditions.
- Schedule outdoor activities in the early morning to avoid the hottest part of the day.
- Wear well-ventilated broad brim hats and water soluble sun screen for sun protection.
- Wear clothing that allows for rapid evaporation of sweat from the skin; ie light coloured, loose fitting and provide protection from the sun.
- Adequate water intake assists in body temperature control. To minimise dehydration, drink 500 to 750ml of water per hour to keep the body hydrated.
- Take extra cautionary measures during unseasonal heat waves or during unusually hot or humid weather.
- If students have recently experienced high temperatures from infection, diarrhoea or vomiting they should NOT take part in strenuous exercise.
- Staff, parents/carers, volunteers who:
  - are over 65 years of age;
  - suffer from medical conditions (eg asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, epilepsy, overweight or obesity);
  - are taking medication (including over the counter medication); or
  - who are pregnant

  may experience difficulties exercising in the heat.

***Treating Heat Related Medical Problems***

*Heat Exhaustion*

Heat exhaustion is characterised by low blood pressure on completion of exercise. Victims suffer a faint-like collapse with ashen-grey skin. They usually recover rapidly on lying down with legs raised. The difference between heat exhaustion and the high risk heat stroke is not always obvious and as such, students who have collapsed should be rapidly cooled as below.

*Heat Stroke*

Heat Stroke occurs when the body's ability to control its own temperature is impaired. Heat stroke is potentially fatal. The severity of complications from heat stroke increase with the duration of high body temperature. Immediate first aid is essential and potentially lifesaving. The aim is to lower the body temperature rapidly using the "strip/soak/fan" methodology as follows:

- Remove excess clothing/loosen clothing;
- Cool the body by wetting the skin liberally;
- Fan to aid evaporative cooling;
- Raise legs to improve blood pressure; and
- Apply Icepacks - placed in groin or armpit is helpful.
- An ambulance will be called if necessary

**NB. HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT STROKE CAN STILL OCCUR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOOD HYDRATION**