

COLD WEATHER GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

Periodically, guidelines are requested by schools regarding when students should remain indoors during extremely cold weather.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist schools in making these decisions.

USER GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC WINDCHILL

Windchill W/M₂ Effect

-17°C to -25°C Normal winter clothing generally adequate. Pleasant conditions for most outdoor activities cease.

-25°C to -27°C Warm winter clothing recommended. Most outdoor activities unpleasant without facial protection. Exposed flesh will freeze with prolonged exposure. Shortened recess period may be warranted.

NOTE: FOR WINDCHILLS LISTED BELOW, THE DECISION TO KEEP STUDENTS INDOORS IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPAL.

-27°C to -34°C Warm clothing is essential. Facial protection is recommended. Outdoor activities are not recommended. Exposed skin will freeze in **10-15 minutes**. *Indoor recess advised.*

Below -34°C Facial protection essential. Extremely dangerous for outdoor activities or travel. Avoid going outdoors unaccompanied. Skin will freeze in less than **10 minutes**

Below -42°C Conditions for outdoor travel such as walking becomes dangerous. Exposed skin areas **will freeze in minutes**.
-windchill appears in forecasts at -25°C
-windchill warnings issued at -40°C

Weather Information: Phone 983-2050 (recording updated hourly) Environment Canada Info Line for temperature and windchill factor.

Or

Internet Address: www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca

FROSTBITE

- Frostbite is a localized injury caused by cold in which the affected tissues are frozen. It most commonly affects the toes, fingers and face (nose, ears, cheeks and chin).
 - With continued cold, the blood supply to the extremities is steadily reduced, accelerating the freezing process.
 - As circulation becomes impaired, sensation in the affected area is lost. Unless the tissue is rewarmed quickly, the skin and superficial tissues actually begin to freeze solid. If the conditions persist, the freezing enlarges and penetrates further.
 - Adequate clothing and equipment greatly reduce the risk of frostbite. Body movement increases circulation and generates heat. Children with restricted mobility are at greater risk of frostbite and hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature). This is a particular concern for activities like tobogganing or sitting on a sleigh, or other activities that include prolonged exposure.
 - Dressing warmly and staying dry are essential to prevent frostbite. Children should wear:
 - a hat
 - a neck tube or other covering for the face (covering the mouth and nose)
 - mittens or gloves
 - sleeves that are snug at the wrist
 - warm and water resistant proper fitting outerwear and boots
- ** scarves should be strongly discouraged in the school setting due to the risk of strangulation, if used they should always be tucked into a jacket

Early signs of frostbite

- At the first sign of redness or pain in any skin area, remove the child from the cold or protect any exposed skin, as frostbite may be beginning. Any of the following signs may indicate frostbite:
 - A white or grayish-yellow skin area
 - Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
 - Numbness

*** SEE DEFINITIONS OF FROSTNIP AND FROSTBITE AT END**

NOTE: Victims are often unaware of frostbite until someone else points it out because the frozen tissues are numb.

Treatment:

- For early signs of superficial frostbite move the affected person to a warm room as soon as possible
- Warm the affected area **gradually** through direct contact with body heat (i.e. place a warm hand against the affected area)
- **Do not re-expose affected area to the cold after being warmed**
- Do not raise the temperature of the affected area much above body temperature
- **DO NOT RUB SNOW ON THE AFFECTED AREA**
- **ANY RUBBING OF THE AREA MAY CAUSE FURTHER DAMAGE**
- Any suspected episode of frostbite should be reported to a parent
- Treatment of severe frostbite should be left to properly trained medical personnel
- Children should be educated about the prevention and early detection of frostbite and be instructed to report incidents of possible frostbite to their teacher

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- **At -40, frostbite is possible in less than 10 minute**
- **At -35, frostbite is possible in 10 - 15 minutes**
- **Frostnip: a mild form of frostbite. Skin is yellowish or white but soft to the touch. There is a painful tingling or burning sensation of warmth**
- **Frostbite: a more severe condition where the skin and underlying tissues are frozen. Skin is white, waxy, and hard to the touch. There is no sensation**
- **Treatment for frostbite (not frostnip)**
 - Get medical help
 - Do not rub or massage
 - Do not warm until you can ensure that it will stay warm
 - Warm it gradually; use body heat or warm water (40 to 42°C), avoid direct heat, which can burn