

Associated Public Schools of Victoria

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APS SPORT ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

1. CONTEXT

- (a) The APS oversee competition in a range of sports at a range of venues. The organisation has in place a considered management structure for overseeing inter-school sporting competition.
- (b) As part of their governance responsibilities the Heads of the APS schools have identified the need to provide guidelines for those acting on their behalf in the management of inter-school sporting competition.
- (c) As the APS and AGSV provide a combined competition for Girls Sport (Secondary) and also play representative matches against each other, the Heads have consulted during the formulation of the guidelines that they believe to be appropriate. (Refer to the Combined AGSV/APS Adverse Weather Policy).

2. REFERENCE POINTS

- (a) The Heads of the Association have made reference to appropriate documentation from well credentialed bodies on the likelihood and effects of heat stress and protection against lightning strikes and hail.
- (b) The Heads of the Association have shared legal advice which inform their responsibilities under what may be regarded as “duty of care”.
- (c) The Heads of the Association have made appropriate reference to “community standard” regarding the provision of sporting competition in general, and in particular sports.
- (d) The Heads of the Association have involved their own senior staff who are experienced in the provision of inter-school sporting competitions in the consultative processes.

3. THE FUNCTION OF THE POLICY

This is a general policy designed to draw attention to the general risks of heat-related illness or injury in sport and provide precise guidelines for conduct of sporting activities in hot weather and in instances of lightning strikes or hail.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Documentation which should be read in conjunction with the policy is provided within Appendix 1.

5. POLICY DETAIL

(a) *Prior to Competition:*

- (i) If at 9.00 a.m. on the day prior to the matches/event the predicted temperature in the Greater Melbourne and Metropolitan area as provided by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) **Melbourne – Olympic Park Weather Station** is **40°C (36°C for Primary)** or above then the APS Sport Office in conjunction with the Chair of Heads will by 10.00 a.m. on the day prior cancel all sport (for the sake of clarity this includes indoor and outdoor sport).
- (ii) Prior to the event the monitoring of the predicted temperature will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of the Association.

(b) *On the Day of the Competition and or Training:*

Heat:

- (i) At 31°C (ambient temperature) Directors of Sport, Sport Coordinators and Coaches must consider and implement where appropriate management procedures consistent with the advice provided in Appendix 1 which will attempt to ensure that environmental and risk factors relevant to heat stress are minimised.
- (ii) Once the ambient temperature is 36°C (**34°C for Primary**) or above, then the game/event must be suspended **for a minimum of 10 minutes**. If the temperature does not fall below 36°C (**34°C for Primary**) during the subsequent 30 minute period then the game/event must be cancelled. In the case of 1st XI Cricket and Rowing Regattas, competition may resume in the allocated playing time.
- (iii) On the day of the event, the responsibility for monitoring temperatures is as described below:

Outdoors:

- It is the responsibility of the *Home Delegate* or their delegated representative to monitor the **BOM App** to determine local temperatures.

Indoors:

- It is the responsibility of the *Home Delegate* or their delegated representative to use a thermometer to gauge the temperature.

Central Venue:

- It is the responsibility of the venue manager to determine the temperature.

Air Quality:

- (i) When the Air Quality Index (AQI) reading reaches **51+ PM_{2.5}**, Directors of Sport, Sport Coordinators and Coaches, where appropriate, must consider and implement management procedures consistent with the advice provided in Appendix 3 which will attempt to ensure that environmental and risk factors relevant for respiratory issues/stress are minimised.
- (ii) Once the AQI reading reaches **100 PM_{2.5}** or above, then the game/training must be suspended. If the AQI reading does not fall below 100 PM_{2.5} during the *subsequent 60 minute* period then the game/training must be cancelled. In the case of 1st XI Cricket and Rowing Regattas, competition may resume in the allocated playing time
- (iii) On the day of the *Competition and or Training*, the responsibility for monitoring air quality is as described below:

Outdoors:

- It is the responsibility of the *Home Delegate* or their delegated representative to monitor the **AirVisual App** to determine local air quality.

Indoors:

- It is the responsibility of the *Home Delegate* or their delegated representative to use an air quality detector to measure the air quality.

Central Venue:

- It is the responsibility of the venue manager to measure the air quality.

Electrical storms/ Lightning:

- (i) In the event of electrical/ thunderstorms, (especially if the time delay between thunder and the flash is less than 30 seconds) players, coaches and officials should seek urgent safe shelter. Play should only restart if at least 20 minutes has passed since the last sound of thunder and coaches and officials are confident of player safety.
- (ii) Severe Hail
When safety is compromised by severe hail, coaches and officials should agree to abandon play and seek immediate shelter until the hail stops and it is safe to restart play.

(c) Major Events

In the event of an imposed delay or cancellation due to adverse weather for the finals of the APS Combined Sports (Athletics), Swimming & Diving and The APS Regatta, these events may continue when it is safe to proceed in whole or part at the discretion of the Chair of Heads in consultation with the APS Heads and in conjunction with the APS Chief Executive Officer.

6. COMMUNICATION

- (a) This policy will be communicated by the Chair of the Heads of the APS to:
 - (i) The Chief Executive Officer of the Association
 - (ii) To other relevant senior staff within their Association
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer and other relevant staff will have the responsibility of communicating the policy to Sports Coordinators within their Schools.
- (c) Any public statements regarding the policy should be made only by the Chair of the Heads of the Association or by the Chief Executive Officer of the Association if the Chair deems it appropriate to delegate that responsibility.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- (a) The Position Description of the Chief Executive Officer of the Association and of any other relevant Senior Staff must reflect precisely the responsibilities indicated above.
- (b) Position Descriptions for Sports Coordinators within competing Schools must reflect precisely the responsibilities indicated here including the communication to coaches and team managers of the detail within Appendix 1.
- (c) The policy as outlined above has implications for the means of communication between team coaches/managers and senior sports staff on competition days including a review of the use of mobile phones.
- (d) It would be prudent for schools to review the nature of relevant medical information they request from parents/carers regarding the predispositions of students to the effects of heat.

APS SPORT ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

APPENDIX 1 – HEAT POLICY

1. CONTEXT

- (a) Heat related illness and injury consequent upon exercise can be severe and in some cases fatal. The danger of heat related illness and injury must never be underestimated. Heat stress during exercise needs to be carefully managed.
- (b) The management of exercise during extreme heat is particularly important in the case of children and young adults (referred to as “children” throughout the policy and supporting documentation)
- (c) The management of elderly personnel who may be acting as officials is also particularly important.

2. DETAIL

Environments to which competitors are exposed will vary as will individual responses to heat stress on the individual. It should be noted that there is a risk of heat related illness or injury at all temperatures, however, the risk is much greater at 30°C or above.

It is important to understand the factors that may contribute to heat stress. What constitutes extreme conditions will vary depending upon:

(a) Environmental Factors

- (i) The type of sport e.g. fitness based vs. skill based
- (ii) The venue utilised by the sport e.g. water based vs. field based or indoor vs. outdoor
- (iii) The duration and intensity of the activity
- (iv) The time of day during which the activity takes place
- (v) Humidity of the immediate environment
- (vi) Exposure to Solar Radiation

(b) Individual Risk Factors

- (i) Fitness levels of the athlete / official
- (ii) Age of the athlete / official
- (iii) Acclimatisation
- (iv) Hydration levels
- (v) Past history of heat stress (genetic factors)

It is difficult to predict precisely how an individual will respond to heat stress and how likely heat stress is to cause illness or injury in a particular sport. Where there is any doubt, on the basis of medical information provided by parents/carers in relation to a particular individual, specialised medical advice should be sought.

(c) Management of Environmental and Individual Risk Factors

Where possible, the factors contributing to heat stress should be managed by attending to:

- (i) Event timing: altering the time of the event to take in the cooler part of the day (e.g. early morning)
- (ii) Reduce the length of the game
- (iii) Ensure all players are well hydrated, prior to and during the event

- (iv) Player rest and rotation
- (v) Pre-cooling
- (vi) Appropriate clothing
- (vii) Use of shade, fans, ice, water etc
- (viii) Acclimatisation to heat through appropriate training

(d) Signs of Heat-Related Illness or Injury

- Common symptoms of heat-related illness or injury include (but are not limited to) fatigue, nausea, headache, confusion, light headedness, high heart rate, collapse, dry skin and/or pale skin colour (pale skin colour may occur with or without dry skin).
- If a child complains of feeling unwell during exercise or experiences any of the above symptoms, he or she should **immediately** cease activity and steps should be taken to assist the child to cool down (removal of unnecessary clothing, provision of drinks, move to a cool area with air-conditioning or a fan, spray with water, application of wrapped ice packs to the child's armpits and/or groin area). **Under no circumstances** should a child be permitted or encouraged to continue exercise.
- Medical advice should be sought promptly if the symptoms do not improve rapidly.
- Medical advice should **always** be sought **immediately** if a child collapses.
- If a child suffers heart-related illness or injury, a record should be maintained to assist in treatment and immediate and future management of the condition.

(e) Guidelines for Avoiding Dehydration (Sports Medicine Australia)

General

Dehydration can occur in the winter months; however, the importance of addressing hydration is underlined in extreme heat.

- Children should not wait to feel thirsty as thirst may not be a reliable indication of fluid needs
- Cool fluids may be absorbed more rapidly than warmer fluids
- Children must avoid starting exercise when dehydrated – they should drink plenty of fluids prior to exercise
- If children do not like the taste of water they may well favour flavoured drinks such as “sports drinks” and low concentration cordial
- If children are well hydrated they should be able to pass a good volume of clear urine in the hour before exercise

Specific

- Encourage children to have their own water bottle that they are able to regularly refill to remind them of the need to drink regularly
- A reasonable guideline is the intake of 500ml an hour before exercise
- A reasonable guideline is the intake of 150ml every 15 minutes during exercise
- Children must be actively encouraged to take advantage of all breaks in play to take in fluids
- Students should be encouraged to drink liberally after exercise to ensure full rehydration

December 2025 (replaces Feb 2022, Sept 2019, Sept 2017 & Feb 2014)

Scheduled for Review: 2027

APPENDIX 2

1. To determine the weather from your current location, download the BOM Weather App.
How to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPkVSjqLpA4>
2. Enter the name of the suburb where the match is being played.
3. The temperature reading (shown below in red) is the 'current temperature' and should be used when making decisions regarding this Adverse Weather Policy.

As a matter of clarity, the 'feels like' temperature is **NOT** to be used.



The BOM Weather app shows weather for your location

APPENDIX 3

AIR QUALITY INDEX RATINGS

Exercise Category	General Recommendations	Exercise-specific Recommendations	PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Good to exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a good day to be outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All forms of exercise are encouraged. 	<25
Moderate Caution for those who are sensitive to air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The air is probably smoky. Sensitive groups may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are sensitive to air pollution, you may need to reduce prolonged high intensity endurance exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running). Most individuals will tolerate exercise as normal, without symptoms. 	25-50

Poor conditions for exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The air is probably very smoky. Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider reducing prolonged high intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running). If you are sensitive to air pollution, avoid prolonged high intensity endurance exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) or move it indoors. Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms. Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise. 	51-100
Very poor conditions for exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The air is probably very smoky. Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) should be avoided or moved indoors. Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms. Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise. Any individual may be affected by exercising in smoky air at these levels. If symptoms develop, cease exercise and move indoors. 	101-150
Likely to be hazardous to exercise outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The air is probably extremely smoky. Everyone will be at risk of experiencing symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. Listen to your local emergency radio station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most individuals should avoid physical activity outdoors. Where there is an intention to play organised high level sport and there are medical staff on site to advise, these levels of pollution should 	>150

	<p>or visit your State Emergency Agency for advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay indoors away from smoke and dust.• If you are sensitive to air pollution, follow your treatment plan. Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home.• If you think the air in your home is uncomfortable, consider going to an air-conditioned building like a library or shopping centre for a break if it's safe to do so.• If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice.• Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance.	<p>trigger a discussion between medical staff and officials about the advisability or otherwise of proceeding with the event.</p>
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