



Telephone: 9570 3986 Facsimile: 9579 4423 School No. 4778
Homepage: www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au Email: valkstone.ps@education.vic.gov.au

MANAGING EXTREME HEAT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Valkstone Primary School on 03 9570 3986 or valkstone.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Valkstone Primary School prepares for, manages and responds to periods of extreme heat to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors during all school activities, on and off school grounds.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Valkstone Primary School activities including teaching and learning programs, recess and lunch, physical education and sport, Whole School Assembly, excursions, camps and other off-site activities, and school council-operated out of school hours care.

POLICY

Extreme heat can cause heat-related illness and can worsen existing medical conditions. Children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress. Valkstone Primary School will implement risk controls to prevent, minimise and respond to heat-related risks, and will adapt school activities and schedules in response to local conditions, Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) forecasts and warnings, and Department of Health heat health warnings.

Planning and risk assessment

Extreme heat risk management actions are incorporated into the school's Emergency Management Plan (EMP). The EMP includes actions for before, during and after extreme heat events, triggers for action, and contingencies for critical service disruption (for example power, water or transport impacts).

Heat risks are reviewed every three years, and after significant events or infrastructure changes.

Warnings and alerts

During the high-risk season (October to March), the Principal or delegate will monitor: BoM heatwave forecasts and warnings (including severe and extreme categories), Department of Health heat health warnings, and local on-site conditions (temperature, humidity, and indoor comfort).

Hydration

The school will ensure access to cool drinking water and encourage frequent water consumption throughout the day. Additional drink breaks will be scheduled during hot conditions. Students will be reminded to bring a filled water bottle and to refill regularly.

Cooling measures and shade

Where available, the school will utilise air conditioning, fans and ventilation strategies (such as managing blinds and cross-ventilation) to reduce indoor heat. Outdoor activities will be directed to shaded areas wherever possible. Valkstone Primary School provides shade sails over the Prep–2 playground and between the MPR and G3 classrooms, and established trees around the oval and other play areas.

Clothing and sun protection

When outdoors, students must follow the Sun Protection Policy (including wearing an appropriate sun-protective hat during the hat-wearing season) and use sunscreen as recommended.

Timetable and activity adjustments

On days of very hot or extreme heat, the school will adjust timetables and activities to reduce students' exposure to peak temperatures. This may include modifying, postponing or cancelling strenuous outdoor activities, and scheduling physical activity during cooler parts of the day.

The school will consider indoor recess and lunch arrangements when forecast temperatures exceed 35°C, or where local conditions make outdoor activity unsafe. On these days, outdoor play periods may be shortened and students may spend additional time indoors in supervised, cooler environments.

As the gym can retain heat, assemblies will be shortened, held in an alternative format, or cancelled when forecast temperatures exceed 32°C. Consistent with the Sun Protection Policy, a shortened lunch play timetable will apply on days of extreme heat.

Whole School Assembly (Gym)

Whole School Assembly is normally held indoors in the gym. As the gym is generally a warm space and there is no alternate suitable location, the Principal or delegate may shorten, modify or cancel assemblies when heat risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level.

Example – cancelling Whole School Assembly

The Principal or delegate will cancel Whole School Assembly when a BoM severe or extreme heatwave warning, and/or a Department of Health heat health warning is current, or when the BOM prediction (reference [Bentleigh East](#)) for Bentleigh East at the scheduled time of the assembly is greater than 32 degrees Celsius.

The Principal or delegate will also take into account the cumulative effect of consecutive warm days in the lead-up to an assembly. Where the forecast or recorded temperature has exceeded 30 degrees Celsius on multiple preceding days, the gym may retain heat and reach an unsafe temperature even if the forecast for the day of the assembly is below the 32-degree

threshold. In these circumstances, the Principal or delegate may exercise discretion to cancel or relocate the assembly.

When cancelled, announcements and awards will be delivered via classroom-based communication (bulletin/PA/brief year-level messages). Parents will be informed through the school's usual communication channels, with as much notice as possible.

Heat-related illness: recognition and response

Staff will monitor students and colleagues for heat-related illness, including dehydration, heat rash, heat cramps, dizziness/fainting, heat exhaustion and heatstroke (medical emergency). If a person shows signs of heat illness, first aid will be applied immediately: move to a cool area, provide cool water if appropriate, apply cooling measures (cool compress/ice packs), contact parents/carers as required, and call emergency services (000) for suspected heatstroke.

Staff role-modelling and OHS

Heat risk controls are managed in consultation with the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and relevant staff. During extreme heat, the school may adjust yard duty arrangements, increase breaks, and plan for staff absences/backfill to maintain safe supervision and learning environments.

Families and visitors

Families and visitors attending school activities during hot weather are encouraged to drink water regularly, use shaded areas, wear appropriate clothing and hats when outdoors, and apply sunscreen. Parents/carers should ensure students come prepared with a water bottle and any required medication (for example asthma reliever) and notify the school of any heat-related health concerns.

Community engagement and communication

Clear and timely communication will be provided to staff and families before and during extreme heat events. On receipt of a Heat Health Warning or relevant BoM warning, staff will be briefed on the day's controls and any timetable or activity changes. Where possible, families will be notified before the start of the school day of significant timetable or activity changes resulting from extreme heat (for example, assembly cancellation), through the school's usual communication channels (Compass).

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Valkstone Primary School policies

- Sun Protection;
- First Aid;
- Health Care Needs;
- Asthma;
- Anaphylaxis;
- Duty of Care;
- Camps and Excursions;
- Student Dress Code;
- Health Safety and Wellbeing;
- Communication (School Staff).

Department of Education Policy and Advisory Library

- Managing Extreme Heat;
 - Emergency and Critical Incident Planning;
 - OHS Consultation and Communication;
 - Risk Management – Schools;
 - School Hours;
 - Sun and UV Protection.
- Bureau of Meteorology heatwave warnings and forecasts (website/app/phone).
 - Department of Health heat health warnings and advice (including VicEmergency app watch zones).

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2026
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	August 2029