

## Heat Safety Tips for Schools

As classes begin during the ongoing heat wave in Oklahoma, the Oklahoma State Department of Health offers the following guidelines to help parents, teachers and school administrators be aware of heat-related illnesses and other safety concerns. The extreme triple-digit temperatures in Oklahoma mean that adults should be even more cautious than usual when it comes to hydration needs for students, as well a range of other concerns such as hot playground equipment that could cause burns.

### Hydration:

- Ensure that students are well hydrated and have access to cool and shady areas to cool off.
- Provide access to plenty of cool water as the liquid of choice.
- Encourage students to drink water, even when not thirsty.

### Clothing:

- Encourage students to wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored summer clothing. (Check your school's dress code.)

### Buses:

- Consider stocking school buses with heat illness emergency kits including ice chests with ice, bottled water and wet towels.
- Try to limit time children spend outdoors waiting for buses, or inside a parked school bus that has not cooled down during the loading process.

### Outdoor:

- Consider modification of practice schedules for athletic and band practices and other events.
- Avoid utilizing playground equipment that may become very hot in extreme temperatures.
- Move outdoor activities indoors when feasible to a cooler area.

### Staying Cool:

- To prevent heat fatigue, offer regularly scheduled rest periods.
- Indoor temperatures can sometimes exceed the outdoor temperature, especially if there is no air conditioning. To assist in keeping the classroom temperature comfortable, keep windows and doors open with at least one fan moving air throughout the room.
- Allow students to utilize alternative areas that may be cooler, such as those located on the lower or ground level of the school or shady areas on the school grounds.
- Consider relocation of classes without air conditioning to those with air conditioning.

### Recognition of Heat Illness:

- Encourage students to tell teachers if they feel ill.
- Be aware of these heat stress symptoms:
  - Muscle spasms and cramps
  - Skin is flushed, or cool and pale
  - Headaches, dizziness and nausea
  - Rapid pulse rate
  - Shallow breathing
  - Elevated body temperature (in cases of heat stroke, body temperature can be very high, sometimes as high as 105 degrees F)
  - Cessation of sweating
  - Loss of consciousness

### Treatment of Heat-related Illness:

- Move the person to a cooler place to rest in a comfortable position
- Replenish fluids - Give person small amounts (4 oz.- 5 oz.) of water every 15 minutes
- Make sure the person drinks slowly
- Loosen tight clothing
- Apply wet cloths or immerse in a cool bath
- Immediately call 911 if the person loses consciousness