



## EXTREME WEATHER POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gembrook Primary School Office.

Ph: 03 5968 1313

email: [gembrook.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:gembrook.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

### Purpose:

Gembrook Primary School strives to ensure that staff and students participate in the educational program in the safest environment possible, minimising the risk of harm. The health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors will be paramount during extreme weather conditions including heat, cold, winds, storms and or rain.

### Scope:

This policy addresses how Gembrook Primary School aims to respond to and prepare for extreme weather conditions.

It applies to:

- All students and staff, including casual relief staff and volunteers.

### Implementation:

Gembrook Primary School will continue to operate under most weather conditions, in accordance with Department of Education guidelines. Gembrook Primary School will only close on the direction of Department of Education, for example: in the event of a Catastrophic fire danger rating in fire weather district (see Gembrook Primary School's Bushfire Preparedness Policy).

Staff in charge of activities will monitor weather forecasts and advise those concerned of any changes to plans as soon as possible. Days of extreme weather conditions will be noted with instructions via Compass, the staffroom whiteboard, email and text message system, as required.

Academic classes will run as normal with the teacher varying learning activities appropriately to accommodate the prevailing weather. Staff will monitor students for signs of distress relating to weather conditions and provide the appropriate first aid as required.

- All staff are to be aware of current impending weather conditions throughout scheduled breaks in a typical school day and on all outdoors activities within and outside of the school grounds.
- An extreme weather timetable will be called by the Principal, Assistant Principal or a nominated staff member.
- The Principal, Assistant Principal or nominated staff member may decide on days of impending extreme weather to:
  - a. Shorten the recess or lunch breaks of outside play
  - b. Call an extreme weather timetable for the entire school day



This decision will be based on current weather conditions and information from the Department of Meteorology. The decision will be set and monitored and if weather conditions change, the decision will be updated and staff informed.

- Extreme weather timetables will be called in the event of, but not limited to, rain, storms, high winds and heat (above 35 degrees) according to the Bureau of Meteorology report (BOM).
- Extreme nature timetables will be called in the event of, but not limited to, wild pests such as swarms of bees, mosquitos, locust etc.
- During extreme nature circumstances, the area or facility impacted will be closed off to students while the hazard is controlled.
- When planning outdoor activities, staff will make allowances for extreme weather conditions based on predicted weather conditions.
- An extreme weather timetable will be prepared and teachers will organise appropriate indoor activities (games, movies etc.) for students in their class. Yard duty staff will supervise indoor activities.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of and implement their duty of care during extreme weather or extreme circumstance timetables.
- On days of impending extreme hot weather, students are advised to use the shaded areas of the playground and to drink water on a regular basis.
- Staff taking Physical Education and Sport classes are to make appropriate decisions in regard to the type and location of activities on days of extreme weather or impending extreme weather.
- Staff who work outside (gardeners, PE teachers, yard duty teacher etc.) should ensure they follow Sun Smart guidelines, including appropriate school SunSmart hats, sunscreen use (SPF 30+) and have adequate hydration.
- The School should ensure there are sufficient shelters and trees to adequately shade the school grounds, particularly in the following spaces:
  - where students congregate for lunch
  - outdoor lesson areas
  - popular play areas
  - assembly areas
  - sporting grounds/pools

Staff are to advise and encourage students to use these areas during recess and lunch times.



Specifically:

### **High Winds**

In the event of high winds Gembrook Primary School may postpone or cancel outside activities. Play areas may be modified or closed, and staff and students will be directed away from trees. Recess and lunch playtimes may be adjusted to an indoor program.

### **Heavy Rains**

During times of heavy rain or a violent storm, staff in charge of activities will monitor weather conditions and may postpone or cancel outside activities. Students may remain either indoors or be directed to undercover areas.

### **Extreme Temperatures**

Activities outside may be postponed or cancelled at temperatures below 10 and above 34 degrees. Staff in charge of activities will monitor weather forecasts and advise those concerned of any changes to plans as soon as possible. During periods of extreme weather, students will be encouraged to use personal water bottles at all times, as required.

### **Excursions**

The Principal and staff off-site at camps or excursions will monitor weather forecasts and conditions, and cancel or vary the program plan to ensure the health and safety of all involved, and in accordance with any advice from the Department of Education.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- Gembrook Primary School's Bushfire Preparedness Policy
- Gembrook Primary School's Sunsmart Policy
- Department of Education's [Heat Health Policy](#)
- Department of Education's [Excursions Policy](#)
- Sunsmart Website - <https://www.sunsmart.com.au/>
- Bureau of Meteorology - <http://www.bom.gov.au/>

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	October 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026