



CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS EVENTS NETWORK

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

DATE OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: APRIL 2020

DATE OF NEXT MAJOR REVIEW: FEBRUARY 2025

APPROVAL AUTHORITY: CSEN BOARD

GOVERNING AUTHORITY: CSEN BOARD

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CSEN EVENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

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INTRODUCTION

Extreme Weather conditions could include:

1. Predicted temperature of 30 degrees or more
2. Inclement weather, such as thunderstorms, hail and rain, electrical storm, dust storm or other weather alerts
3. Smoke from bushfires

CSEN sport and cultural events should not go ahead in the case of heavy rain, hail, lightning or thunderstorms and reference should be made to the following 'Extreme Weather Guidelines' to determine whether a game or event should be postponed or suspended. In the case of wet weather, always adhere to advice from local council or other state/regulatory body who manages the operation of the playing fields or location.



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1. HOT WEATHER

It is expected that participants, staff and volunteers take care when competing in high temperatures. Competition staff should constantly remind players, officials and spectators about keeping hydrated before, during and after matches. Also, sun exposure presents risk of sunburn and skin cancer, and needs to be managed with shaded areas, sunscreen and hats/ clothes. Youth and the aged are particularly exposed to risks associated with sun exposure and hot weather.

2. EXTREME WEATHER

Please refer to the Extreme Weather Guidelines below.

EXTREME WEATHER GUIDELINES

HAZARD	ACTION REQUIRED
Heavy Rain	Play / Competition should be suspended until hazard clears. If it continues to rain heavily during that time, it is recommended that play / competition be suspended until further notice.
Lightning / Thunderstorms	When lightning is considered to be a possible or actual threat to a game or event, consult the Bureau of Meteorology website bom.gov.au . The accepted "safe" distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning within 10km constitutes a threat• For resumption of play / competition, it is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder.
Hail / Ice on grounds	Play / Competition should be suspended immediately until hazard clears. Refer to weather radar for official report and where available, shelter should be offered for players / spectators / officials until cleared.



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Extreme heat	36 degrees + Play / Competition should be postponed or cancelled. 31 – 35 degrees Play / Competition should be interrupted at 10 minute intervals for a minimum period of 2-5 minutes during which time rest, drinks / cooling techniques & facilities should be used by all officials and players involved. Each session shall not exceed 60 minutes. 30 degrees Communication of heat stress management strategies / warnings of possible risk.
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Extreme Cold weather	When severe winter weather is forecast, weather reports and traffic conditions within the immediate area should be monitored, if the ground is slippery from frost, snow, rain or mud, or if the temp drops below 8 degrees, it is at the discretion of the controlling body to determine whether play / competition should be suspended or cancelled until hazard clears.
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Limited air quality / Pollution / bushfire smoke	Smoke from bushfires (using the AQR - https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/EPAirWatch) Where warnings have been issued for poor ratings on match days, Sport Coordinators are to continually monitor and assess air quality ratings for their area. It is the recommendation that once the air quality rating reaches 'Poor' (100+) in your area, all CSEN matches be suspended. If that rating doesn't come down within 30 minutes of activity being suspended, the recommendation is that the match is to be cancelled.
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3. SUN PROTECTION

All students and staff should use a combination of sun protection measures throughout the day to ensure they are well protected. Particular care is taken between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) when UV levels reach their peak.

Sun protective clothing should be included in each school's sports uniform. Students are also required to wear broad brimmed hats that protect their face, neck and ears, whenever they are outside.

Sunscreen - SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen should be made available by each school for use by their students at CSEN sporting activities.



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Role Modelling

CSEN staff and school staff should act as role models by:

- Wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses outside.
- Seeking shade whenever possible.
- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) when attending CSEN activities.

4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Students have a responsibility to ensure that the impact of environmental factors such as extreme heat is not exacerbated by their own conduct. Accordingly, the following general guidelines should be followed by students:

- Ensure adequate fluid intake prior to sport and during sport
- Monitor hydration
- Notify medical and coaching staff when affected by heat or when performance is noticeably affected
- Use water and electrolyte drinks
- Use pre-sport, sport and post-sport cooling strategies
- Do not play in the heat with an illness
- Apply sun protection factor 30+ sunscreen in high UV conditions

Schools have a responsibility to educate students in these guidelines for personal action.

5. EPIDEMIC THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA

What is epidemic thunderstorm asthma?

During grass pollen season (1 October to 31 December) people may notice an increase asthma and/or hay fever. Grass pollen season also brings the chance of epidemic thunderstorm asthma. Thunderstorm asthma is thought to be triggered by a unique combination of high amounts of grass pollen in the air and a certain type of thunderstorm. For people who have asthma or hay fever this can trigger severe asthma symptoms. When many people develop asthma symptoms over a short period of time, related to high grass pollen and a certain type of thunderstorm, it is known as epidemic thunderstorm asthma.



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What do the epidemic thunderstorm asthma forecasts mean?

The [epidemic thunderstorm asthma forecast](#) will operate **between 1 October and 31 December**. It combines the forecasting of a certain uncommon type of thunderstorm and grass pollen counts across Victoria.

The forecast spans three days (today, tomorrow and the day after) and uses a colour-coded scale from low to high risk: **green** (low), **orange** (moderate) and **red** (high).

- A **low risk (green)** forecast means that the elements necessary for an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event are not expected and an event is unlikely.
- A **moderate risk (orange)** forecast means that one of the elements necessary for an event may be present (i.e. a high pollen forecast or a severe thunderstorm storm with strong winds) and there is a moderate chance of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event occurring.
- A **high risk (red)** forecast means that a high pollen forecast and severe thunderstorm(s) with strong winds are likely to be present increasing the risk of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event occurring.

Forecasts are not a formal 'warning' and are designed to inform people at risk that they should be prepared. The forecast only indicates whether the chance of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event occurring is increased – a higher forecast does not mean that an event is certain to happen, nor does a lower forecast mean that an event will not happen.

The forecasting system is not designed to forecast the risk of individual's experiencing asthma and hay fever symptoms, which occur every year during the grass pollen season.

On a day of high risk the department will issue up-to-date relevant advice and warnings on the [Vic Emergency](#) website.

The forecast for the current day is only updated once at approximately 12:30pm, any further updates (such as public advice and warnings) will be posted on the Vic Emergency website and app.

What should I do on days with increased risk?

People should be aware of the heightened risk of thunderstorm asthma in general throughout the grass pollen season and be appropriately prepared. The forecast should not replace appropriate prevention and good asthma and hay fever management, which is the best way to protect yourself from thunderstorm asthma. The forecasting system is also not designed to forecast the risk of individuals suffering asthma and hay fever symptoms, which occur every year during the grass pollen season.

People with current, past or undiagnosed asthma or hay fever are considered to be at risk. Having both asthma and hay fever or poorly controlled asthma increases the risk further.



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Those at increased risk should:

- avoid exposure to any storms that may emerge, especially the wind gusts that precede them
- have a reliever appropriately available (as discussed with your doctor or pharmacist)
- remind themselves of their asthma action plan and have practical knowledge of the four steps of [asthma first aid](#).

Preparing for epidemic thunderstorm asthma

Everyone in the community should know the signs and symptoms of asthma, and know the four steps of [asthma first aid](#) so they know what to do if they or someone is having an asthma attack.

Thunderstorm asthma can affect those with asthma or hay fever - especially people who experience wheezing or coughing with their hay fever.

6. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

All schools should monitor environmental factors such as extreme heat in matches and events administered by the CSEN. The school should assess the heat stress risk by reviewing information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology for the specific location, and heat stress management strategies should be applied at all CSEN administered games and events. The following general guidelines should be followed by schools:

- Use cooling aids if available – ice vests, spray bottles, sponges, fans and shade
- Choose heat permeable jumpers and socks
- Use a school official to be delegated the primary responsibility of monitoring and managing players for heat stress issues as they arise
- Provide adequate fluids
- Provide ample sunscreen for participants
- Provision of additional shaded areas for respite

7. CSEN RESPONSIBILITIES

Where possible, CSEN should schedule matches and events to avoid extremes of heat and allow for increased recovery from those conditions. CSEN should also endeavor to schedule matches and events at venues equipped with cooling facilities in high risk circumstances – fans, shade, air conditioning and emergency medical facilities.

In addition, CSEN may:

- Increase the length of intervals to enable teams to leave the field for the shade of the rooms at each break
- Reduce length of play
- Consider postponing or rescheduling games



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8. CANCELLATION OF MAJOR CARNIVALS/RALLY DAYS

- If a carnival / rally day needs to be cancelled on the morning of the event due to extreme weather the CSEN Executive Officer must send an SMS and email message by 7.30 am to the Principal and Sports Coordinator from each campus.
- A person from each campus must respond by email or mobile to the CSEN Executive Officer within 10 minutes of receiving the message. If a campus does not respond the CSEN Executive Officer must contact and speak to the person.
- Due to the distance travelled by schools, every effort will be made to cancel the events, if necessary, 24 hours in advance.
- If Sport Coordinators or Principals have a concern with the weather, they should ring the CSEN Executive Officer to discuss possible courses of action.
- If a decision is made to continue with a Carnival or Rally Day a school may withdraw up until 12:00pm on the day prior if still uncomfortable with the decision. That school must notify the CSEN Executive Officer.
- If, after a major carnival has started, there is significant wet weather, the Sport Coordinators from all schools present, along with CSEN officials will consider cancelling the remainder of the carnival. If this occurs, the Carnival will not be rescheduled and any results recorded will stand.
- There will be no rescheduling of Major Carnivals / Rally Days.
- Semester Sport – The decision to cancel a semester sport fixture game rests with the home school's Sports Coordinator. This decision must be made by 12:30pm on the day if the game is to be cancelled. A draw shall be awarded in the event of inclement / dangerous weather.

POLICY AMENDMENTS

DATE	CHANGES MADE
February 2021	Epidemic thunderstorm asthma risk added and CSEN structure changes
February 2022	AQR and VIC Emergency links added, Term sport changed to Semester Sport. Approval authority changed from committee to Board.