

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

EXTREME WEATHER PROTOCOL

REVISED JANUARY 2025



OUR MISSION

We are a

CHRIST-CENTERED
CATHOLIC FAITH community
that **celebrates diversity**
and fosters **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**,
inspiring ALL to **REACH**
their **FULL potential** in
MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

OUR VISION

ENCOUNTERING SOULS
AND
OPENING MINDS
so that **all students**
SUCCEED

OUR VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY • COMMUNITY • COMPASSION • INTEGRITY
FAITHFULNESS • JUSTICE • STEWARDSHIP



Introduction

This document replaces Niagara Catholic's Extreme Heat and Cold Protocol produced by the Board's Coordinator of Health and Safety and Communications Officer in 2017.

Niagara Region has changed the way in which cold alerts are communicated to the community. Effective immediately, information will be shared with the Communications Department through Niagara Region's Emergency Response Team. Communications will share information with principals and vice-principals for action as guided in this protocol. There is no change to the process for reporting heat alerts.

Temperature and weather conditions vary throughout the peninsula. Please check the temperature and conditions in your area to ensure the health and safety of your students and staff. Principals should use their best discretion after checking temperatures in their areas when deciding to keep students indoors.

In both cases when an alert is issued ahead of time, principals should remind families that students should come to school appropriately dressed for the weather and of any weather-related cancellations or changes that may be made during the day.



Extreme Heat Alert

Environment Canada issues an extreme heat alert in Niagara and most of Southern Ontario when:

- Two or more consecutive days of maximum daytime temperatures are expected to reach 31°C or warmer and nighttime temperatures are expected to fall to 20°C or warmer.
- Two or more consecutive days of humidex values are expected to reach 40°C or higher.

Niagara Region does not advise school boards of heat alerts. Communications has signed up with Environment Canada to receive heat alerts. When heat alert is issued/ principals/vice-principals will be notified by Communications when one is on placed as soon as it is shared. Principals/ vice-principals should be prepared during the hot weather to remind people that a heat alert is always possible, and people should dress for the weather.

In the event of a heat alert, principals are to action the following:

- Advise staff to close windows and curtains to avoid overheating the room unless there is a breeze to circulate the air.
- Advise staff to turn off the lights and shut off computers to reduce radiant heat.
- If computers must be used, use first thing in the morning.
- Cycle classes to cooler areas of the school such as libraries and gyms throughout the day.
- Students may go outside during recess especially if there is a breeze, but students should limit activity, be in the shade whenever possible and remain hydrated. This may involve staggering recesses.
- Passive activities in the shade (story time, or walks) are encouraged.
- Make regular announcements to remind staff and students to stay hydrated.
- Practices scheduled for days with high heat alerts should be rescheduled if possible. If re-scheduling is not possible, practice should be modified to reduce the effects of physical strain (shorten the length of practice, relocate the practice to an area with air conditioning, adapt training to conditions or move practice to before school rather than after school).
- Consult with coaches if outdoor games/events are scheduled for days with a heat alert in effect.

Individuals who are at increased risk of heat-related illnesses, such as those with diabetes, cardiovascular problems, autoimmune illnesses, or are pregnant, are encouraged to advise their supervisor of their condition.



According to Environment Canada, Humidex warnings include:

Humidex Range	Degree of Comfort	Action Required
20°C-29°C	• Quite comfortable	• Dress for the weather • Wear hats/sunscreen • Stay hydrated • Outdoor activities are generally safe
30°C-39°C	• Some discomfort may be experienced	• Dress in light, loose clothing • Wear hats/sunscreen • Stay hydrated • Limit outdoor activity to early morning/late evening
40°C-45°C	• Great discomfort may be experienced	• Dress in light, loose clothing • Wear hats/sunscreen • Stay hydrated • Limit outdoor activity to early morning/late evening • Be prepared to cancel outdoor activities during peak heat hours of the day • Keep windows/blinds closed if classrooms do not have air conditioning
45°C -53°C	• Dangerous	• As above, with all outdoor activities cancelled
54°C +	• Heat stroke is imminent	• As above

Recognize the signs of heat-related illnesses in students and staff and know how to react:

CONDITION	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
Heat Rash	• Red, bumpy rash • Severe itching	• Change to dry clothes • Move to a cool area • Rinse skin with cool water
Heat Cramps Heat cramps are common in the most-worked muscles (arms, legs, stomach). They are warnings for other heat-related illnesses.	• Muscle cramps	• Move to a cool area • Loosen clothing • Gently massage/stretch affected muscles • Drink cool salted water or electrolyte replacement beverage (no salt tablets) • Seek medical attention if none of the above provides relief
Fainting/Heat Exhaustion (Medical attention is required)	• Heavy sweating/ cool, moist skin • Body temp. above 38°C • Weak pulse/ low blood pressure • Tired and weak • Nausea/vomiting • Extreme thirst/panting • Blurred vision • Fainting	GET MEDICAL ATTENTION • If the person has fainted or lost consciousness, assess the need for CPR. • Move the person to a cool area • Loosen or remove clothing • If the person is standing or sitting, have them lie down • Place cold, wet cloths, or ice on the person's head, neck, and/or armpits or soak clothes in cool water • Encourage sips of cool water if conscious • Stay with the person
Heat Stroke (Life-threatening, medical attention is required)	• Body temp. above 40°C and any one of the following: • Person is weak, confused, acting strangely • Has hot, dry, red skin (classic heat stroke) or is sweating profusely (exertional heat stroke) • Rapid pulse, headache, dizziness, convulsions	CALL AMBULANCE • If they faint or lose consciousness, assess the need for CPR and seek medical attention immediately • Move the person to a cool area • Loosen or remove clothing • If the person is standing or sitting, have them lie down • Place cold, wet cloths, or ice on the person's head, neck, and/or armpits or soak clothes in cool water • Encourage sips of cool water if conscious • Stay with the person

Extreme Cold

Extreme Cold Alerts are issued by the Niagara Emergency Management Team when the temperature drops to -15° Celsius and below or feels like -20° Celsius with the wind chill. When a cold alert is issued, principals/vice-principals will be notified by Communications.

We recognize temperatures may vary within the region. Principals are to use their best judgement on whether it is in the best interest of students to keep them inside or to allow them outside to play at recesses.

On days when extreme cold alerts are in effect, principals are to action the following:

- Keep students inside for breaks and recesses or limit length of time outdoors
- Consider rescheduling/adapting any outdoor activities planned for cold alert days that would keep students outside for prolonged periods of time.
- Students without appropriate cold weather clothing should remain inside with teacher supervision.
- In the event of a boiler/furnace malfunction on a cold weather day, the principal will notify Facilities Services as quickly as possible to have the affected equipment repaired, as well as their Family of Schools Superintendent.
- If the repair can be repaired quickly, students will be relocated to the warmest part of the school. If it cannot, the principal will work with their Family of Schools Superintendent to discuss a course of action, including closing the school and cancelling any community use permits until the school has heat. Communications will support messaging to families



Recognize the signs of cold-related illnesses and know how to react

CONDITION	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
Frostnip	• Red, numb, or tingling sensation in exposed skin (usually cheeks, ears, noses, fingers, but occasionally toes if not wearing warm footwear)	• Move person to a warm area - frostnip resolves with warming
Frostbite (Seek medical attention)	• White, waxy skin that feels numb and hard	• Move person to warm area • If feet are affected, carry the person to avoid further damage • Remove any wet clothing • Put frozen areas in warm water (about 100°F) or gently wrap the areas in warm blankets or clothing • Do not rub the areas • Do not use direct heat such as a heating pad • Do not thaw frozen skin if there is a risk of it freezing again
Hypothermia (Life-threatening condition, medical attention is required)	• Shivering • Exhaustion • Clumsiness • Memory loss/confusion • Drowsiness	• Move person to a warm area • Remove any wet clothing • Warm centre of the body first (chest, head, neck, and groin) with a warm or electric blanket • If they faint or lose consciousness, assess the need for CPR and seek medical attention immediately

Air Quality

There are times when the weather is otherwise nice, but the air quality is affected. This could be due to a fire or chemical spill in the area, or due to a situation outside the area that is affecting the region.

When air quality is poor, principals are to keep students indoors following the same procedures for hot weather, other than keeping windows open for a breeze. Windows are to remain closed when air quality is poor.

People with heart or breathing problems or other medical conditions are at higher risk of illness due to poor air quality. To ensure the health and safety of all staff, please follow the guidance below:

Air Quality Index 1-3

Health risk: Low

All regular activities may continue as planned for all students and staff.

Air Quality Index 4-6

Health risk: Moderate

Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors, particularly for students and staff with known medical conditions. Monitor all participants for coughing and/or throat and eye irritation. If these occur, move indoors.

Air Quality Index 7+

Health risk: High

Reschedule all outdoor activities. Keep windows closed. If necessary, Facilities Services will adjust air intake to keep contaminated air from flowing into the school.

Check the Air Quality Index [here](#) and [here](#).

Know Your Alerts

Niagara Catholic receives extreme weather alerts in real time from Environment Canada. Create your [own account here](#).

There are a number of extreme weather alerts we may expect in Niagara throughout the year, particularly in the winter. These are:

[Cold alert](#)

[Blizzard](#)

[Blowing snow](#)

[Snowfall](#)

[Snowsquall](#)

[Winter storm](#)

[Heat alert](#)



