

Baltimore County Public Schools
HOT WEATHER ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Extreme heat is a relative term and is defined as temperatures that are substantially hotter and/or more humid than average for a location for the time of year. Consequently, there is no absolute temperature that can be considered to be too hot for outdoor exercise, temperature must be considered in relation to time of year. It takes as long as two weeks to adjust to increases or decreases in air temperature. The following general guidelines may be used:

<u>TEMPERATURE</u>	<u>HUMIDITY</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
Less than 80°	Any	No restrictions
80-90°	70% or less	No restrictions Water break every 15 min
80-90°	Above 70%	Reduce intensity Water break every 15 min Rest in shade to cool off Watch at risk students
90-100°	Any	Reduce intensity Breaks every 15 min Rest in shade to cool off Water breaks every 15 min Watch/excuse at risk

In addition to temperature and time of year, the following factors affect how students respond to temperatures and should be considered when making decisions about outdoor activities:

- Relative humidity – Humidity reduces effectiveness of sweating to cool the body.
- Wind – Wind speeds evaporation of sweat and cools body quicker.
- Sun – Direct sunlight increases the perceived temperature by as much as 5 degrees.
- Maturity – Young children do not have fully developed systems to cool their body; higher metabolism makes them heat up more quickly with exercise.
- Hydration – Dehydration will reduce the efficiency of the body’s cooling system. Children need to be hydrated often.
- Clothing and equipment – Dark clothing increases absorption of sunlight and heat; clothing and equipment reduce the exposure to air to evaporate sweat to cool the body.
- Exercise intensity— Use the chart below to determine appropriate activities.
- Health Status – Certain health conditions impair the body’s ability to cool itself; obesity reduces the effectiveness of natural cooling processes because the fat layer acts as an insulator.
- Medication – Certain medications affect the body’s ability to effectively cool itself.

- Conditioning – Students who are out of shape have less effective physical processes to cool themselves and become overheated much more quickly than students who are well-conditioned.

School staff should also consider air quality in decisions about outdoor activity. Air quality is often correlated with temperature but should be considered independent of air temperature when the air quality is categorized as unhealthy. The Environmental Protection Agency’s Air Quality Index is as follows:

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects

As a general rule of thumb, outdoor activities should be eliminated or strictly limited when air quality is categorized as unhealthy, very unhealthy, or hazardous.