



SPORTS ASSOCIATION FOR ADELADIE SCHOOL

HEAT POLICY

REVIEW DATE: (November 2021)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines Sports Association for Adelaide Schools (SAAS) approach to protecting the safety of participants during extreme weather. Warm to hot weather creates a risk that participants may experience a form of exertional heat illness, such as muscle cramps, fainting, heat exhaustion and even heat stroke.

The aim of SAAS's Extreme Weather Policy is to:

- Protect the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who participates, including volunteers, families, coaches and officials.
- Detail strategies for participation to continue with appropriate mitigation and risk management strategies in place.

Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact Leo Panzarino, Leo.Panzarino@saas.asn.au.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

SAAS is committed to ensuring our sport is accessible to everyone and we take every opportunity to provide the highest level of service to all members and participants. SAAS and member schools have a duty of care to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of participants, during warm to very hot weather, heatwaves and other extreme weather such as thunderstorms, hail, lightning and excessive rain. When there is a risk of exertional heat illness, or danger to the participants, SAAS commits to acting in the best interest of all participants by implementing mitigation strategies.

Fixtures will be cancelled or cease when the temperature reaches 38C or above for Secondary (Years 7-12) or 35C and above for Primary.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all people involved in our organisation, including committee members, volunteers, coaches, officials, participants, parents and guardians. It covers all activities in which people are physically active. It covers situations where people are inactive yet situated in extreme conditions, such as volunteers, parents, spectators and coaches.

This policy is designed to reduce the risks and prevalence of injury and illness which can occur when people play sport during extreme weather conditions.



4. RECOGNISING EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS

Exertional heat illness can be categorised from mild to severe, including muscle cramps, heat syncope (fainting), heat exhaustion, heat injury and heat stroke (life threatening).

Associated signs and symptoms can include:

- Headache.
- Light-headedness and dizziness.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Fatigue.
- Change in personality (disorientation, confusion, irrational behaviour, irritability).
- Change in performance (unsteadiness, loss of balance and coordination, loss of skills).
- Seizures.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Cardiac arrest.

People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that exertional heat illness can occur whenever there are actual or potential environmental, individual and organisational risk factors, and it is in these circumstances that SAAS is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

NOTE: Exertional heat illness can be life threatening, therefore, if a person is concerned about an immediate risk to an individual's health and safety, the person must phone "000" (or "112" from a mobile when you are out of your service provider's coverage area) as soon as practicable.

5. RISK FACTORS FOR EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS

SAAS recognises that multiple factors pose a risk to the health and safety of participants, including the environment, factors specific to individuals and factors specific to our sport.

Environmental Risk Factors

Climate related environmental risk factors can increase the risk of illness and injury. Risk factors include:

- Air temperature.
- Humidity (it becomes more difficult to regulate body temperature in higher humidity due to a decrease in sweat evaporation).
- Wind speed (this affects the rate of water evaporation).
- Radiant temperature (such as radiant heat from ground surface).



Individual Risk Factors

The following individual risk factors are relevant our participants These factors need to be understood by everyone involved at SAAS.

- **Age:** Children and adults over 65 are considered at greater risk.
- **Poor physical condition:** Some people may experience heat illness at lower temperatures due to exercising beyond current capacity.
- **Inadequate acclimatization:** This occurs when our body is not conditioned to warm and/or humid climates.
- **Illness or medical conditions:** Individuals may be more affected by heat due to medications and illness.
- **Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances:** Good hydration is needed to keep your body's core temperature down during sport or hot conditions. You must rehydrate to compensate for what the body loses in sweat.

Sport Risk Factors

Sport risk factors are specific characteristics of the sport activity which can contribute to an increased risk of exertional heat illness. The following risk factors are relevant to all SAAS sports. Many of these risk factors can be adjusted to reduce some of the risk of exertional heat illness.

Risk factors include:

- **Excessive clothing and athletic gear** can increase the risks of the body's core temperature rising.
- **Lack of awareness and education of exertional heat illness**
- **Venue and location.** Surfaces such as asphalt and synthetic turf radiate more heat than water or natural grass. Indoor venues with low air flow or without air conditioning can also present a risk.
- **Level and duration of activities.** The longer the activity and the more intense, the higher the risk.
- **Time of play.** Risks are highest between 11am and sunset.

6. MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The risks of exertional heat illness being suffered by participants can be reduced through a range of mitigation strategies. These strategies can be implemented by everyone. Individuals with a duty of care to participants should consider appropriate mitigation strategies during warm to very hot weather conditions.



The following sport modification can be considered by the relevant schools if there is a risk of exertional heat illness to participants.

Hydration

- Promoting hydration strategies including drinking to thirst before, during and after physical activity.

Water and cooling

- Encouraging participants to bring additional drinking water
- Increasing availability and access to water
- Encourage participants to bring ice slurry drinks and cold towels

Shade

- Increasing the amount of shade available (by providing portable shelters, encouraging participants, clubs, and teams or families to bring portable shelters)
- Increasing frequency of breaks for participants to take refuge in shaded areas

Rescheduling / timing changes

- Changing the time of the event to a cooler part of the day
- Postponing to future dates
- Increasing frequency and length of breaks
- Shorten duration of games or races
- Exclude higher intensity activities (sprints, long distance)

Rule changes

- Reducing length of games, races or activities
- Mandating player rotations
- Mandating rest and drink breaks
- Allowing for appropriate clothing or uniform modifications where required
- Reducing or removing individual or team penalties if they elect not to participate.

Incidents

- Ensure professional first aid responders, or qualified first aid personnel, are always on site when people are physically active during hot weather
- Monitor players closely and recognise signs and symptoms of exertional heat illness

7. ACTIVATING THIS POLICY

7.1 CANCELLATION DUE TO HOT WEATHER

Schools will assess the local conditions at specific venues in real time in order to action any necessary cancellations for both midweek and weekend sport.

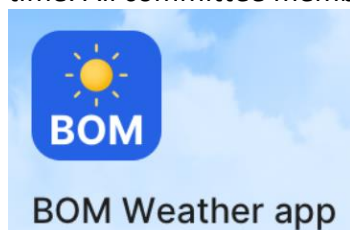


Fixtures will be cancelled or cease when the local temperature reaches 38C or above for Secondary (Years 7-12) or 35C and above for Primary, including outdoor Water polo and Swimming. The cancellation will not occur for indoor Water Polo and Swimming competitions.

Schools will make every effort to maximise playing time prior to the threshold temperatures being reached by working collaboratively and where possible, commencing the fixture at an earlier time in the day.

First XI Cricket and Drive Tennis may be cancelled on an assessment of local conditions when either one or both Director of Sport (or other Senior school members of staff) decides that the match should be cancelled due to the conditions. Playing conditions will be modified in hot weather to allow for extra drinks breaks and variations to playing time. When making a decision SACA guidelines for afternoon cricket should be taken into consideration.

SAAS uses the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) as the source of climactic information in real time. All committee members, coaches and officials should ensure they have access to:



- The BoM Weather smartphone app <http://www.bom.gov.au/app/>. This provides information on ambient temperature and Apparent Temperature (AT) which includes air temperature and humidity and appears on smartphone app as e.g. 'feels like 20.1C'.
- The BoM website: Forecast by suburb [Weather - Bureau of Meteorology \(bom.gov.au\)](http://www.bom.gov.au)

Please note, all Adelaide suburban forecasts default to one of the following Station locations; (link to website list and forecast issued at 5.15am each day [BoM Forecast Summary for South Australian Towns](#))

- Adelaide (West Terrace/ngayirdapira)
- Adelaide Airport
- Edinburgh Airport
- Hindmarsh Island
- Kuitpo
- Mount Crawford
- Mount Lofty
- Noarlunga
- Nuriootpa



- Parafield Airport
- Parawa
- Roseworthy
- Strathalbyn

If climate conditions (like heatwaves) are likely to pose an increased risk to people's health, the Department of Health and Human Services will issue a Heat Health Alert at <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/alerts>

We recommend at least two school emails will be registered to receive Heat Health Alert notifications.

Sports Medicine Australia 'Beat The Heat' Fact Sheet, <https://sma.org.au/sma-site-content/uploads/2017/08/beat-the-heat-2011.pdf>) provides information and guidelines for playing and exercising safely in hot weather.

7.2 OTHER CANCELLATIONS DUE TO HOT WEATHER

A school may elect to cancel fixtures where the forecast temperatures are lower levels than those stated above where local conditions are more severe and poses an increased risk for student participation or for staff involved in preparation of facilities such as cricket pitches.

7.3 SCHOOL SPORTS TRAINING

Training cancellations to be determined by individual schools using their own Policies

7.4 LIGHTNING/ THUNDERSTORMS

Due to the inability to accurately forecast electrical storms and the likelihood of very localised weather patterns it is not possible or practical to create a policy that can be applied to all venues on any particular day. However, the following guidelines should be considered and followed;

Guidelines

If the weather forecast is for possible thunderstorms/lightning remain vigilant for approaching storms and/or changing or rapidly deteriorating conditions.

If you see lightning apply the "30 – 30 Rule" Count the time from seeing lightning to when accompanying thunder clap is heard, if less than 30 seconds (storm is less than 10 kms away) go immediately to a safer place. Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder clap before continuing play in an open area.

Hearing thunder means that lightning is likely to be within striking range.

In the event of thunderstorm/lightning where player/officials/spectator welfare is deemed unsafe by either team coach (or referee) play should be suspended.

If conditions improve – remember the 30 – 30 rule and wait 30 minutes, games may recommence. This may require some modification to duration of game.



7.5 HEAVEY RAIN / HAIL / WIND GUSTS

Heavy rain or hail is unlikely to present as a significant personal injury risk to participants. However, heavy rain or hail may leave a playing surface dangerous and therefore unplayable!

As is the case with lightning/thunderstorms it is not possible to have in place a policy that can be applied to all venues on a particular day. The following guidelines should be followed:

Recommendations and Guidelines

In the event of heavy rain or hail, if the conditions such as the safety of the playing surface or player welfare are deemed unsafe by either team coach (or referee) then play should initially be suspended.

If the conditions improve i.e. rain stops or eases to what is considered a safe level by coaches/referees and the playing surface can be cleared or has drained sufficiently to enable play to re-commence, games should then be completed.

This may also require a modification of existing rules regarding the durations of the game.

7.6 AIRBORNE CONTAMINATES (Sand, Dust or Smoke)

Any situation in which the air quality is compromised and presents a risk to players, officials and spectators then the

Airborne contaminants can come in many forms, such as Dust, Sand or Smoke.

The relevant Officials and Administrators must ensure the health, safety and well-being of the players, officials and spectators. If the air quality is deemed to create an unacceptable risk, then play can be suspended till either the threat has passed or the scheduled match cancelled and all parties to leave the area for a safe location.

7.7 CANCELLATIONS DUE TO OTHER WEATHER CONDITIONS

It is recognised that extreme weather conditions could impact upon proceeding with games. Fixtures may also be cancelled by either participating school if deemed necessary.

The SAAS Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of the SAAS Board may issue a blanket cancellation where weather conditions across the metropolitan area are considered so extreme as to warrant such a cancellation.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Personnel involved in protecting participants from extreme weather include the committee members, parents and volunteers. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of all members and are expected to:

- Understand the risks of exertional heat illness, as appropriate to their role.



- Appropriately act on any concerns raised by participants about exertional heat illness.
- Know and follow guidelines in relation to the care of all members during warm to very hot weather, and at times of extended periods of exceptionally high day and night-time temperatures (heatwaves).
- Promptly communicate changes through to participants through the most commonly used communication channels at the club (??? *such as Email, Text Messages, Facebook, apps or other*).

9. POLICY PROMOTION

This policy will be made available to all members via SAAS Internet <https://www.saas.asn.au/policy/>

10. REVIEW PROCESS

This policy will be reviewed by the Leo Panzarino and the respective Board on an annual basis.

If you would like to provide SAAS with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact Leo Panzarino, Leo.Panzarino@saas.asn.au.

11. REFERENCES

Australian Centre for Research into Injury in Sport and its Prevention (ACRISP), 2017. *Document and content analysis of heat policies and guidelines in Victorian community sport*. Federation University Australia: Ballarat.

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BoM website for weather forecasts by suburb <https://weather.bom.gov.au/onboarding>