



Board of Education Policy Manual

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

AR 5420.4

COLD WEATHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

Purpose: To provide guidelines regarding appropriate outdoor conditions for recess and physical education activities during cold weather, in order to safeguard students' health and safety.

Applicability: This regulation pertains to all recess and physical education activities that take place outdoors during the fall and winter months when cold temperatures are a concern.

Definitions:

- ❖ RealFeel™ temperature: a proprietary metric used to describe what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity and wind speeds are factored in. An official value can be found at [AccuWeather.com](https://www.accuweather.com).
- ❖ Frostbite: an injury caused by freezing of the skin and underlying tissues. First degree frostbite involves numbness and reddening of the skin. Second degree frostbite extends to formation of blisters.
- ❖ Hypothermia: a dangerous drop in body temperature below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Warning signs include shivering, confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness, and loss of coordination.
- ❖ Wind chill: the perceived decrease in air temperature felt by the body on exposed skin due to wind.

Compliance: School principals shall ensure compliance with this regulation. Parents must ensure students have appropriate outdoor winter gear.

- a. Students are expected to wear appropriate winter attire when RealFeel™ temperatures are below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. No exposed skin should remain for extended periods.
- b. Recess: When the RealFeel™ is between 15-32 degrees Fahrenheit, elementary and middle school student exposure in recess is limited to a maximum of 20 minutes. Principal discretion should be used when deciding whether or not to allow students to go outside for a maximum of 20 minute recess when the RealFeel™ temperature is between 15-20 degrees. When the RealFeel™ temperature is below 15, students will remain indoors for recess. Parents must ensure students have appropriate outdoor winter gear. School principals will notify parents of students who are not prepared for cold weather play.

- c. Physical Education: Physical education teachers may take students outside for a maximum of 30 minutes when the RealFeel™ temperature is between 15-32 degrees. When the RealFeel™ temperature is below 15, students will remain indoors for physical education. Parents must ensure students have appropriate outdoor winter gear.
- d. Staff should monitor students closely for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Students should be brought inside immediately if presenting symptoms arise.
- e. Interscholastic Athletics (Grades 7-12)- Outdoor practices (and competition where applicable) during the fall and winter months will be allowed with the permission of the athletic director. The following guidelines should be considered when making a decision on whether or not to hold outdoor practices or competitions: [NYSPHSAA Wind Chill Procedures](#)