

How Do We Determine Whether or Not to Go Outside?

We believe that success starts with our families at home. We are also keenly aware that being a walking district that our students may have to be outside longer than students who ride buses to school. The “*Dressed for the Weather*” chart is a visual reminder that can be used with your child prior to coming to school. This way, if the weather permits, you can have confidence that your child has the appropriate clothing for outside or inside activities. You also have confidence that as they leave the house in the morning, they are dressed appropriately for their walk to school.

Multiple factors go into determining when the students go outside for recess and/or gym. Some of these include temperature, humidity, wind chill, “feels like temperature”, time of day, and air quality.

With the pandemic of COVID-19, the PADOH and the ACHD recommended that students participate in outdoor activities daily, weather permitting. Below are the guidelines that are used to determine when it is safe to play outdoors. In addition, our gym is being used as an extended lunchroom area. This means that gym classes either take place in the classroom or outside. We believe that our students benefit from physical activity. If the weather permits, we plan to continue going outside so dressing in layers will be important. The recommended temperature for students to play outside is 31 degrees to 91 degrees. If the temperature is lower than 31 degrees or hotter than 91 degrees other factors should be taken into consideration. For the winter months, we will choose to use the range of 36 and higher with other favorable conditions.

1) What is the minimum temperature for sending students outside for recess or gym?

Read the scenarios below which provide guidance for going outside.

The temperature is 38 degrees Fahrenheit with bright sun and minimal wind. The “feels like” temperature then reads 38 degrees. Students would be encouraged to go outside for approximately 20-30 minutes with the appropriate clothing.

If, however, the temperature is 38 degrees with minimal sun and a wind chill, then the students would not be encouraged to go outside and play. Instead, a brisk walk lasting about 5-10 minutes may be more appropriate again with necessary clothing.

In these scenarios, we will use our best judgement to determine when to stay in or go out so dressing in layers is important. Watching the weather hour by hour is a great way to gain an understanding of what we will most likely do.

2) When is it too hot to play outside?

The temperature is 90 degrees with bright sun and high humidity. The “feels like temperature” may be as high as 100 degrees. The students would not be encouraged to play outside or engage in strenuous activities. Sitting under a shaded area, reading, or playing a board game would be appropriate activities. Water breaks would also be encouraged.

If the temperature is 90 degrees with a partly cloudy sky and low humidity with a “feels like temperature” of 90 degrees, it would be appropriate for students to play outside for 20-30 minutes with the appropriate clothing and water breaks.

3) What if my child is getting over an illness or maybe coming down with something?

We recognize that some students are susceptible to illness. Therefore, we strongly encourage communication parents, teachers, and nurses. If your child is ill or just getting over an illness, communicate this to your child’s teacher so that accommodations may be made for him or her. Our school nurse or support nurse would be happy to discuss options for your child. We also understand that staff members may be called away unexpectedly or may be absent. Even the best plans sometimes do not turn out how we expect. In these cases, we will do our best to notify you if a concern arises.

4) What about weather delays?

Delays are made with several factors in mind. A decision must be made before 6:00 am at the secondary level and 7:00 am at the elementary level to delay. School cancellations will now be rare since we can use Flexible Instruction Days (FI Days) and remote learning days. A separate letter will be shared about FI Days and remote learning days.