

# Lincoln County Schools

## WEATHER INDEX GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

### Purpose

The Lincoln County School (LCS) system is committed to protecting the health and safety of our students and staff. LCS provides various opportunities for outdoor physical activities before, during, and after school. These guidelines are meant to provide a decision-making structure to promote student and staff safety when local weather may be detrimental to their health.

Students need daily, vigorous exercise. These guidelines are intended to provide preventive strategies that may limit or revise certain activities for physical education and other outdoor programs before, during, or after school.

### Hot Weather

Heat induced illness is preventable. Children do not adapt to extremes of temperature as effectively as adults for the following physiological reasons (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000):

- Higher surface area-to-body mass ratio than adults, allowing a greater amount of heat to transfer from the environment to the body.
- During physical activity, children produce more metabolic heat than adults.
- Sweating capacity is considerably lower in children than adults, reducing the ability to dissipate body heat by evaporation.

### Guidelines

When excessive heat occurs, the following precautions are to be taken for all outdoor physical activity, including but not limited to: recess, physical education classes, and field trips.

Students should be hydrated before going outside and have access to drinking water while outside. In activities lasting longer than 30 minutes, periodic water breaks should be incorporated (approximately every ten minutes).

The HEAT INDEX is the "feels like" or effective temperature. As relative humidity increases, the air seems warmer because the body is less able to cool itself via evaporation of perspiration. As the index rises, so do the health risks.

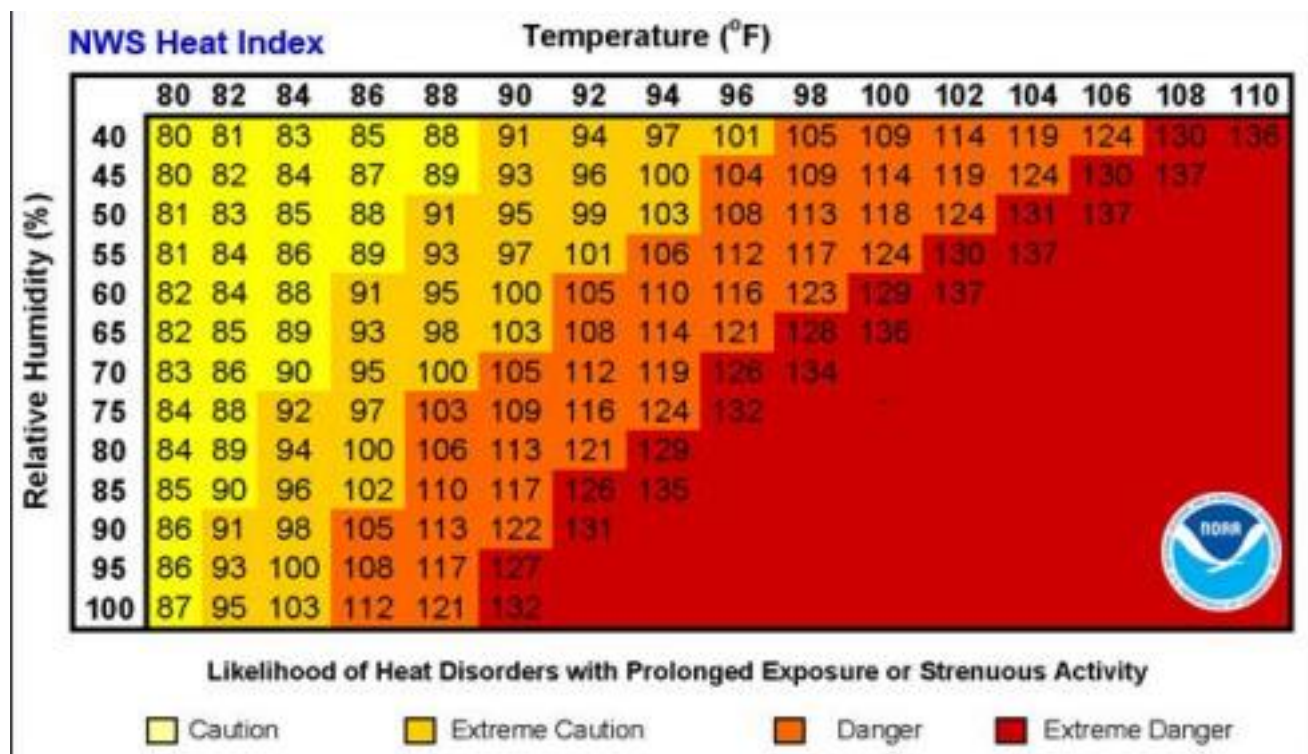
During the school year, on days that have a Heat Index warning predicted, a district designee will inform the schools of the Heat Advisory. Once the Heat Advisory is communicated, a school designee will inform all staff of the Heat Advisory and the suggested guidelines will be put into place. Each school will determine the Heat Advisory communication channels for the specific school site.

### Guide lines for determining Heat Index

Temperature and humidity data

shall be obtained from [weather.com](http://weather.com) Details specific to the school should be accessed as follows:

- Enter school zip code (district office zip code will be used)
- Select: "hour-by-hour" tab
- Highest estimated temperature and humidity during school hours should be used to calculate HEAT INDEX from the chart below. Limit activities according to second chart.



Heat Index	Category	Activity Limitations
<80		No limitations- 5 min water break/rest every 30 minutes
80 to 90	Caution	75% vigorous activity/25% light activity or rest. Encourage hydration- 5 min water break/rest every 25 minutes
91 to 103	Extreme Caution	50% vigorous activity/50% light activity or rest. Sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible. Enforce hydration- 5 min water break/rest every 20 minutes
104 to 124	Danger	All well-conditioned athletes and employees must be under constant supervision. Frequent water breaks 5 min for every 15 minutes of activity. Recreational activity for recess and PE is discouraged during this time outside for unconditioned students and those with underlying health issues.
125+	Extreme Danger	All nonessential outdoor activities and work will be cancelled.

Sample Plan for Extreme Caution Category:

Recess/PE: 10 minutes in classroom/cafeteria/large indoor space 20 minutes outside

5 minutes water break  
5 minutes in classroom  
*Alternate shaded activities (as allowable) with sun exposure limit of 10 minutes*

**Sample Plan for Danger Category:**  
**Recess/PE: Not recommended- stay indoors**

**Sample Plan for Middle and High School athletics and High School Band: Coaches should follow the Heat and Humidity guidelines listed by the NCHSAA in the LCS Athletic Handbook (pgs.50-57)**  
**If we are in a Code ORANGE for air quality, coaches should be aware of any student athlete that is susceptible to heat related conditions.**

#### **District/School Recommendations**

- Schools create a communication channel to use when Heat Advisory is in effect.
- Communicate to all schools that students are allowed to bring water bottles to school and have access to them throughout the day.
- For additional information concerning the air quality forecast including a detailed forecast discussion, visit the following link on the NC Division of Air Quality website: <http://www.ncair.org/airaware/forecast>
- Provide Heat Related Illness training on-line course for all staff that supervise playgrounds, Physical Education teachers, Administrators, Band Directors, and athletic coaches. This is available through the LCS Safe Schools Video training series --- Heat Illness Prevention (17 min course).
- The District lead nurse will provide Heat Index information and American Academy of Pediatrics information on Climatic Heat Stress in Children to each school's health office staff.
- Athletic Directors and Licensed Athletic Trainers (HS) will also use the Wet Bulb temperature devices and procedures in assisting the decision-making choices per the NCHSAA guidelines. These parameters are covered in the LCS Athletic Handbook (pgs. 50-57).

#### **Cold Weather**

The threshold for COLD weather activity is as follows for each level:

- **Elementary School**
  - No students outside for recess or PE if temperature is under 40 degrees
- **Middle School**
  - No students outside for PE or healthy active child activity if the temperature is under 40 degrees.
  - Coaches and AD should decide based on the conditions outside.
  - If there is ICE on the ground, no practices should be held

outside.

- **High School**
  - No students outside for PE activity if temperature is under 40 degrees.
  - Coaches, AD, Band Director should decide based on the conditions outside.
  - If there is ICE on the ground, no practices should be held outside.
- District inclement weather road checks will take place to ensure safe passage for students and staff.
- All decisions about cancellations of school and early dismissal will be made each day by 5:30am or as soon as possible.
- The Superintendent or designee will make the announcement for all staff, students, and parents specifying weather related changes to our normal operating schedule.

#### **Parent Communication Tools**

- Place a link for Heat Index information on district and school websites.
- Have this plan accessible for parents.