



# SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL

## Heatwave Policy

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2026

This policy applies to all staff and students

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## Introduction

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Heatwaves occur when the minimum and maximum temperatures are unusually hot for three or more days at a given location.

During extreme heat conditions, people are at greater risk of health problems. These can be specific heat related illnesses such as heat-stroke or dehydration, or an exacerbation of existing medical conditions.

Those most at risk include older people, babies, young children, pregnant and breast-feeding women and people with medical conditions.

## Policy

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### Identifying a heatwave

The Head of School and Leadership Team regularly check the Bureau of Meteorology for weather warnings and will communicate to staff if a weather warning for a heatwave is forecast.

### Heatwave Management

In response to a heatwave, Silver Tree Steiner School will prioritise the wellbeing of staff and students by implementing any, or all, of the following:

- **Modify or suspend normal activities.**

This may include closing outdoor areas at playtime such as the Village or Oval and postponing or modifying any outdoor or sporting activities or lessons.

In the event of an Extreme Fire Danger forecast with an FBI rating of 75+, the school will be closed as per the '*STSS Bushfire Emergency Management Procedure*'.

- **Encourage adequate hydration for staff and students.**

Ensure staff and students increase their water intake during heatwave conditions and stay out of the sun.

Ensure students drink regularly throughout class time and playtime.

The school has electrolytes available if required.

- **Facilitate access to the coolest areas of the school.**

Outdoor lessons and playtimes can be spent inside air-conditioned classrooms or the shade of classroom verandahs instead. Please note - all classrooms are installed with air conditioners.

- **Heat stress**

Build awareness about prevention, monitoring and identification of heat stress symptoms. Provide first aid treatment to anyone displaying signs of heat stress. Dial 000 to call an ambulance if at all concerned.

Refer to *Appendix – Heatwave School Factsheet* for more information.

### Identifying and Treating Heat Related Illness

*The following information on health impacts of heatwaves has been taken directly from the Healthy WA website.*

Heat-related illnesses include **dehydration, heat stress and heat stroke.**

## Dehydration

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Dehydration occurs when your body doesn't have enough fluids to keep it working properly.

### Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of mild to moderate dehydration include:

- being thirsty
- dry mouth, including lips and tongue
- light headedness and/or dizziness, particularly when standing up
- headache
- dark urine
- not as much urine as normal

Symptoms of extreme dehydration include:

- extreme thirst
- a very dry mouth, including lips and tongue
- fast heart rate
- fast breathing
- low blood pressure
- fever
- little to no urine
- feeling irritable, drowsy or confused

### Treatment

If you suspect a person is suffering dehydration, encourage them to:

- rest in a cool, well-ventilated area
- remove excess clothing
- drink small amounts of cool water, often

## Heat Stress

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Heat stress occurs when your body cannot cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature.

Some people may be more at risk of heat stress when it is very hot. Those more at risk include babies and young children, the elderly, and people with certain health conditions or on certain medications.

### Signs and Symptoms

Signs of heat stress include pale skin, excess sweating or no sweating and dark urine.

Symptoms of heat stress include:

- tiredness and lethargy
- headache
- dizziness

- feeling faint
- muscle cramps
- feeling thirsty
- urinating less often

## Treatment

If you suspect a person has heat stress, encourage them to:

- rest in a cool, well-ventilated area, such as Reception
- remove excess clothing
- drink plenty of water
- apply a wet cloth, cold water or ice packs to the skin (armpits and groin)

## Heat Stroke

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Heat stroke is an uncommon but life-threatening complication of grossly elevated body temperature with exercise in heat stressed settings.

**REMEMBER: it is early recognition and first aid in heat stroke that is critical to save a life.**

The risk is highest with:

- high temperatures and/or
- high humidity and/or
- vigorous activity

## Signs and Symptoms

The first signs of heat stroke show in the function of the brain and nervous system. Look for any signs of:

- confusion
- incoherent speech
- abnormal walking
- seizures or coma

In conditions likely to cause heat-related health effects, always suspect heat stroke if a person becomes acutely unwell or collapses, especially if they don't recover promptly on lying flat with the legs elevated. Although there are many possible causes of acute illness or collapse, heat stroke is one of the most important.

## Treatment

Heatstroke is an extreme medical emergency. If not treated immediately, it can lead to permanent damage to vital organs, or even death. **Dial triple zero (000)** to call an ambulance and stay with the person until the ambulance arrives.

While waiting for the ambulance to arrive:

- **STRIP** the person of as much clothing as possible
- **SOAK** with any available water
- **FAN** vigorously by whatever means possible – improvise, e.g. use a clipboard, bin lid.

When available, cool or ice water immersion is the most effective cooling means possible:

- **IMMERSE** the person up to the neck in a cool or ice bath  
OR
- **COVER** all of the body with ice water soaked towels that are changed frequently as an alternative if a bath isn't available but ice is.
- **REMEMBER:** it is early recognition and first aid in heat stroke that is critical to save a life.

## Appendix A – Heatwave School Factsheet



Teachers and school staff

# Heatwave: Stay safe and healthy

A heatwave is a period of unusually hot weather in an area that lasts 3 days or more. Heat puts stress on our bodies and hot nights make it harder to recover.

### Your checklist to help keep students safe and healthy during a heatwave:

#### Stay informed

- Stay up to date on heatwave alerts ([emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au)).

#### Stay in contact

- Know your school heatwave and first-aid procedures.
- Check on students throughout the day, especially those with additional vulnerabilities.

#### Drink plenty of fluids

- Encourage students to drink plenty of fluids regularly throughout the day – this includes water, diluted juice (mixed with water), and low sugar electrolyte or sports drinks.
- Ensure you also drink plenty of fluids. Avoid drinks containing caffeine such as coffee, tea, and caffeinated energy drinks.

#### Keep cool in the classroom

- Keep windows, blinds and curtains shut during the hottest parts of the day to block out the heat.
- Use air-conditioning and fans to keep the classroom cool.
- Open windows and doors during cooler parts of the day to ventilate and cool the classroom if it is safe to do so.
- Identify other school areas to use if the classroom becomes too hot (e.g. library).

#### Stay safe outside

- Ensure students wear a wide brim hat, apply sunscreen, and try to stay in the shade when outside.
- Postpone or modify outdoor activities to include more rest periods.
- Ensure students have access to the coolest areas of the school for recess and lunch.
- Store school lunchboxes in cool areas to reduce the risk of food poisoning and dispose of any spoilt food.
- Provide additional drinking water stations and ensure students know where they are located.
- Ensure students stay cool during school excursions. Never leave students unattended in school buses.



## Appendix B – Heatwave Outdoor Workers Factsheet



### Outdoor workers

## Heatwave: Stay safe and healthy

A heatwave is a period of unusually hot weather in an area that lasts 3 days or more. Heat puts stress on our bodies and hot nights make it harder to recover. Heatwaves kill more Australians compared to any other natural disaster.

If you work outdoors, you have a higher risk of prolonged and direct heat exposure during heatwaves. It is important you take steps to reduce your risk of developing heat related illnesses.

### Your checklist to help keep outdoor workers safe and healthy during a heatwave:

#### Stay informed

- Stay up to date on heatwave alerts ([emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au)), listen to the radio and television weather reports.

#### Is your health at higher risk?

- Monitor your health, especially if you have acute or chronic medical conditions. Speak to your healthcare practitioner if you feel unwell.
- Continue to take your medication and follow your fluid intake requirements as advised by your healthcare practitioner unless instructed otherwise.
- If your medication has been affected by heat (such as loss of power for a refrigerated item), seek advice from your healthcare practitioner and/or pharmacist.
- If you travel from a cool to a hot region for work, using a structured acclimatisation program can protect your health and improve your work performance.

#### Stay in contact

- Know who and when to call for help.
- Identify workplace first-aid procedures.
- Check on coworkers throughout the day.

#### Drink plenty of fluids

- Drink plenty of fluids regularly throughout the day – this includes water, diluted juice (mixed with water), and low sugar electrolyte or sports drinks.
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine such as coffee, tea, and caffeinated energy drinks.

#### Stay safe outside

- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, and loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Wear a wide brim hat and sunglasses and apply sunscreen. Carry a water bottle with you.
- Cool down by wetting your skin with cool water using a spray bottle or wet cloth.

#### Reorganise work

- Rotate jobs and delay tasks to reduce the time you spend in the heat and delay work activities until cooler times of the day, where possible.
- Aim to work in cool areas that are air-conditioned, well-ventilated, or shaded.
- Take additional rest breaks in cool shaded areas.
- Use mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion.



## Know the signs of heat-related illness and act fast



### Dehydration

Feeling thirsty, a dry mouth, and darker urine.



### Treatment

Rest in a cool area, remove excess clothing and drink water.



### Heat stress

Pale skin, excess sweating or no sweating, and dark urine.



### Treatment

Lie in cool area and remove excess clothing. Apply wet cloths, cold water or wrapped icepacks to the skin (armpits and groin) and drink water. Call triple zero (000) if symptoms do not improve in 30 minutes.



### Heat stroke

Confusion, incoherent speech, abnormal walking, seizures or coma.



Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. Immediately call triple zero (000).

If you or someone you know is ill, contact your regular health care provider or call Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222. In an emergency go to your nearest hospital or call triple zero (000).

For more information, visit [healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au)



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