



# Wind Chill Safety Protocol

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## Key Words

temperature; weather; wind chill

## Purpose and Audience

This protocol describes what factors to consider when deciding whether to keep children indoors when cold temperatures might put their safety at risk— before school, at recess, and at lunchtime. The protocol is intended mainly for school staff, but may also help School Advisory Councils to answer questions from parents.

## Definition of Wind Chill

*Wind chill* is the cooling sensation caused by the combined effects of temperature and wind. It is a feeling, not a real temperature.

## Guiding Principles

Student safety is the number one priority. Consider all of the following factors before deciding whether it is safe for children to be outdoors in the cold.

- Are the students dressed in warm clothing, with good protection for their heads, hands and feet?
- How long will the students be outside?
- Will they be standing still or active and generating heat?
- Is the area exposed to the wind? Is it sunny or shaded? (The sun may lessen the effects of the wind chill a little.)

The following chart is based on guidelines from Environment Canada. Keep in mind that the guidelines were developed for healthy adults; young children may be more sensitive to the cold.

<i>If the wind chill is...</i>	<i>then...</i>
0°C to -20°C	take care in deciding whether it is appropriate to send students outside (see the factors listed above)
-21°C to -27°C	seriously consider whether it is appropriate to send students outside
below -27°C	do not send students outside

Because dressing appropriately is one of the most important ways to keep safe in cold weather, please remind students and parents through your school newsletter or other forms of communication.

### **Related Policies and Guidelines**

For related information, see the following board policy:

- *School and Bus Cancellation Policy* (B.012)  
(<http://www.hrsb.ns.ca/files/Downloads/pdf/board/policy/sectionB/b.012-school-bus-cancellations.pdf>)

### **Helpful Links**

For more information about wind chill and the possible health effects, see the following links to Environment Canada's website:

- Wind Chill Index  
(<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1>)
- Cold Injuries and How to Recognize and Treat Them  
(<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1#wc7>)
- Wind Chill Hazards Chart  
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1>)
- Weather Forecasts for Nova Scotia (includes wind chill for most locations)  
([www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index\\_e.html?id=NS](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index_e.html?id=NS))
- Wind Chill Calculator  
(<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1#table1>)