

Austin ISD Guidelines Related to Cold Weather

Outdoor time for children has many benefits. Fresh air in a large space contains fewer germs than indoor space regardless of the temperature. Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement.

Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large and small muscle development, as well as for social and emotional development, by offering variety, challenge and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

Please emphasize to staff and families that people do not catch a cold from being outside on a cold day. This is a longstanding myth. To catch a cold, students or staff would need to be exposed to a cold virus—something that is more probable inside a contained area (such as inside a classroom).

Cold air alone does not bring on an illness.

[According to AISD policy](#), all children in elementary schools must engage in at least 30 minutes of recess per day and 20 consecutive minutes of Working Out for Wellness (W.O.W.). Adequate, safe spaces and facilities will be provided for all students to be physically active. Outdoor spaces are used whenever the weather allows.

During inclement weather, students participate in indoor physical activities during the required W.O.W. time and may have a choice of indoor activities during recess time. All students will participate in recess unless they have exceptions provided through a medical professional statement, an ARD or a 504 plan.

[AISD Recess Policy](#)

When properly clothed, elementary school-aged children can participate in safe, vigorous play in an outdoor environment in most weather conditions. Increased caution should be practiced when temperatures reach below 40 degrees, including the wind chill factor.

- Remind families to dress children with appropriate clothing for them to go outside; dress for the outside rather than the inside. Dressing for the outside weather is also important should the students be evacuated outside the building in the case of an emergency.
- Temperature considerations and proper clothing are as follows:
 - Below 60 degrees: jacket or long sleeves recommended
 - Below 50 degrees: coat and long pants recommended
 - Below 40 degrees: gloves and hats with long pants and coat are necessary
- Schools should honor reasonable requests from families that a student be allowed to stay indoors. Requests based on health reasons must be honored.
- Asthmatic children, in particular, may need special accommodation of their needs during cold weather. The family and school must work to determine when the child should not participate in outdoor activities because of health concerns.



Temperature Guidelines:Wind Chill Factor 35 to 38 degrees (dry weather):

- 45 minutes of total exposure to chill factor
- 15 minutes inside for re-warming
- Students must be in appropriate clothing with extremities covered

Wind Chill Factor 31 to 34 degrees (dry weather):

- 30 minutes of total exposure to chill factor
- 15 minutes inside for re-warming
- Jackets/coats must be worn at all times, extremities covered

Wind Chill Factor of Below 30 degrees:

- **No outside activity**

Reference http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/cold/wind_chill.shtml

