

TDSB's Comment For Dealing With Warmer Temperatures

Summer 2018

At times during the year, Toronto experiences days of extreme heat that can prompt Environment Canada to issue Heat Advisories. These temperatures can and do have an impact on students and staff.

Do TDSB schools have air conditioning?

Out of the TDSB's 582 schools, 127 are [air conditioned](#), 106 have [Cooling Centres](#) (more information below) and the remaining schools have [temporary cooling areas](#), typically in the library.

How do schools without air conditioning manage the heat?

During warmer temperatures, there are a number of actions that schools and staff can take to manage the heat and keep schools, classrooms and students as comfortable as possible, including:

- Using fans to provide air movement, where possible.
- Keeping lights and computers turned off, where possible.
- Keeping doors and windows open.
- Rotating staff and students into cooler/air conditioned areas within the school, where available.
- Encouraging students to drink water.
- Reducing strenuous activities, including gym and sports activities.

Students with a particular susceptibility to heat or medical concerns should speak with staff, who will do their best to accommodate.

The TDSB is in the process of creating [cooling centres](#) at schools with no full building air conditioning. This plan would cool large areas such as gyms or libraries so that students would have access to a cooler area on days of extreme heat. Given the number of schools involved, the plan is expected to take approximately 4 years to fully implement. In the meantime, temporary A/C units have been installed in school libraries to act as a temporary cooling area for any school that does not have A/C or does not have a cooling centre. Moving forward, we will be installing permanent cooling stations at approximately 80 schools per year until complete – starting with elementary schools.

The TDSB is currently exploring other initiatives that may help ease the impact of extreme heat, including two pilot projects that are looking at the effectiveness of ceiling fans in classrooms and new exhaust fans in classrooms to increase air circulation.

Why can't all schools have air conditioning?

The cost to install complete building air conditioning at all schools that don't currently have it would reach into the hundreds of millions of dollars – not to mention the added maintenance, replacement and operational costs. As a result, the installation of full building air conditioning at all remaining schools is not financially possible – especially given that the TDSB currently faces a repair backlog of approximately \$4 billion.

Why don't TDSB schools close during extreme heat?

This decision would put thousands of parents across Toronto in a challenging position of having to find childcare with very short notice — something we know will not be possible in every case. It's with that in mind that the TDSB and other school boards across Ontario do not typically close schools due to heat. As always, parents may also choose to keep their children at home during extreme weather.

Are there any resources available with regards to sun and heat safety?

Yes, there are. More information on beating the heat, including heat and sun safety tips, along with learning materials for teachers and parents, can be found [here](#).

How are decisions made for school recess being inside or out?

From time to time, it is necessary to hold indoor recess or a shortened recess due to inclement weather (rain, extreme cold or heat, severe icy conditions). This decision is typically made at the school-level depending on local conditions which can vary widely across the city; however in some cases, a board-wide directive may be issued.

How can school activities be affected by weather?

Outdoor school activities such as sports practices/games may be cancelled due to severe weather. These decisions are typically made on a school-by-school basis; however in cases where board-wide activities and programs are cancelled, this will be communicated on the TDSB website and social media.