



# PIONEER UNION

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT —

📍 286 ROCKEFELLER ROAD, BERRY CREEK, CA 95916

# EXTREME WEATHER PROTOCOLS PLAN



• EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026 •



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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Extreme Weather Protocols Plan is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of students participating in outdoor activities during extreme weather conditions. This includes recess, physical education classes, athletic activities, outdoor assemblies, field trips, Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) activities, after-school programs, and other outdoor school-sponsored events.

This plan is adopted pursuant to California Education Code Section 33355 and incorporates the California Department of Education's standardized extreme weather guidance.

## Local Conditions and Community Considerations

Pioneer Union Elementary School District serves students in the mountain community of Berry Creek and surrounding areas of Butte County. Due to the District's geographic location, schools may experience weather and environmental conditions that differ from those in surrounding valley communities.

The District has experienced significant impacts from wildfires, including the North Complex Fire (Bear Fire), prolonged smoke events, public safety power shutoffs (PSPS), road closures, emergency evacuations, severe winter storms, and periods of extreme heat. These events may affect school operations, transportation routes, outdoor activities, communications systems, utility services, and access to emergency resources.

When implementing this plan, District administrators may consider local conditions including:

- Wildfire activity and evacuation warnings or orders
- Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events
- Road closures or hazardous travel conditions
- Limited visibility from smoke, fog, or severe weather
- Emergency response agency recommendations
- Facility conditions resulting from weather-related events
- Access to safe transportation routes for students and staff

The Superintendent or designee may implement additional safety measures, modify school operations, relocate activities, or cancel events when local conditions present a risk to student or staff safety, even when weather metrics or statewide guidance would otherwise permit outdoor activities.

Nothing in this plan limits the authority of the Superintendent, principal, or emergency officials to take immediate action necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff.

## 2. Scope

This plan applies to all Pioneer Union Elementary School District, programs, and activities, during the regular school day, before-school programs, after-school programs, summer programs, intersession programs, and district-sponsored activities.

Because Pioneer Union Elementary School District serves a rural mountain community that has experienced wildfire impacts, power outages, extreme heat, winter storms, and hazardous air quality conditions, this plan is intended to provide clear guidance while allowing administrators to respond appropriately to local conditions.

## 3. Definition of Extreme Weather Conditions

For purposes of this plan, "extreme weather conditions" means weather or environmental conditions that may pose a risk to student health or safety, including but not limited to:

- Extreme heat
- Poor air quality and wildfire smoke
- Heavy rain or excessive precipitation
- Thunderstorms and lightning
- Flooding or drainage hazards
- High winds
- Snow, ice, or freezing conditions
- Cold temperatures
- Power outages associated with weather events
- Other environmental conditions affecting student safety

## 4. General Standard

The District may modify, relocate, postpone, or cancel outdoor physical activities when weather conditions present a risk to student health or safety. When there is uncertainty, staff should err on the side of student safety.

Outdoor activities may be modified by:

- Reducing intensity
- Reducing duration
- Increasing rest breaks
- Moving activity to shade
- Moving activity indoors
- Moving activity to a cooler time of day
- Providing additional hydration opportunities
- Canceling or postponing the activity

## **4.1 Professional Judgment and Site Conditions**

The decision frameworks in this plan are guidelines. They are not intended to create a rigid checklist or guarantee that the same action will be appropriate in every circumstance.

This plan is intended to guide reasonable and consistent decision-making. It does not remove the ability of District or site administrators to exercise professional judgment based on real-time conditions, student needs, staffing, facility conditions, emergency directives, or other relevant circumstances.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Superintendent or Designee**

The Superintendent or designee is responsible for:

- Maintaining this plan
- Recommending updates as needed
- Ensuring annual review of the plan
- Coordinating districtwide messaging when needed
- Ensuring site administrators receive training and guidance
- Coordinating with local agencies when conditions warrant

### **5.2 Site Administrator**

Each principal or site administrator is responsible for:

- Monitoring weather conditions during the school day
- Applying this plan at the school site
- Modifying or canceling outdoor activities as needed
- Communicating changes to staff, students, families, and program partners
- Ensuring staff have access to indoor or shaded alternatives

### **5.3 Teachers, Coaches, Activity Supervisors, and Expanded Learning Staff**

Staff supervising students outdoors shall:

- Monitor students for signs of distress
- Encourage hydration and rest breaks
- Follow site directives regarding outdoor activities
- Move students indoors when directed
- Report weather-related concerns immediately
- Call 911 when emergency medical care is needed

## 5.4 Office and Health Personnel

School office and health staff are expected to:

- Assist with monitoring health concerns related to the weather
- Provide care for students showing symptoms of weather-related illness
- Notify parents or guardians when needed
- Assist with emergency response
- Maintain documentation of significant weather-related health incidents

## 6. Weather Monitoring Procedures

Site administrators or designees should monitor weather conditions whenever outdoor activities may be affected.

Site administrators or designees should monitor relevant weather conditions on school days when outdoor activities may be affected.

Weather monitoring may include:

- National Weather Service forecasts and alerts
- National Weather Service HeatRisk
- CalHeatScore
- Local temperature and forecast data
- AirNow.gov
- Local air quality management district information
- Butte County Public Health information
- Butte County Office of Emergency Management information
- Local law enforcement, fire, and emergency services advisories
- District-maintained weather or air quality equipment, if available

During periods of forecasted extreme heat, wildfire smoke, heavy rain, flood risk, or other severe weather, site administrators should check conditions:

- Before school
- Before recess or lunch periods
- Before physical education classes
- Before athletic practices or games
- Before outdoor assemblies or field trips
- Before expanded learning outdoor activities

## 7. Extreme Heat Protocols

### 7.1 Heat Risk Levels

The District should consider the National Weather Service HeatRisk, CalHeatScore, local temperature data, and CDE/CDPH guidance when determining whether to modify or cancel outdoor activities.

The following decision framework is intended to guide site-level decisions:

| <b>HeatRisk Level</b> | <b>Action</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Level 0, Green        | Outdoor activities may proceed as normal. Staff should continue routine monitoring.   |
| Level 1, Yellow       | Outdoor activities may proceed with precautions. Staff should encourage hydration. Staff should monitor students who may be sensitive to heat. Shade should be used when practical.   |
| Level 2, Orange       | Outdoor activities should be modified. Sites should reduce strenuous activity, increase water breaks, increase rest breaks, and use shaded or indoor areas when possible. PE and athletic activities should be moved to cooler parts of the day when practical. Staff should monitor students for signs of heat-related illness.  |
| Level 3, Red          | Outdoor physical activities during the hottest part of the day should generally be canceled, moved indoors, or rescheduled. Strenuous outdoor activity should generally be avoided between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. unless the principal or designee determines conditions are safe with substantial modifications. Recess, lunch, PE, expanded learning activities, and athletic activities should be moved indoors or substantially modified. |
| Level 4, Magenta      | Outdoor physical activities should be canceled, moved indoors, or postponed. Students should not participate in strenuous outdoor activities. Sites should use indoor spaces and shaded areas only for necessary transitions, and employ cooling strategies.  |

## 7.2 Additional Heat Precautions

During high heat conditions, staff are expected to:

- Encourage students to drink water
- Provide rest breaks
- Use shaded areas when outdoor activity is necessary
- Avoid intense running or conditioning activities
- Watch for dizziness, headache, confusion, nausea, weakness, heavy sweating, hot, dry skin, or fainting
- Send students with symptoms to the office or health staff
- Call 911 for suspected heat stroke, loss of consciousness, confusion, seizure, or other serious symptoms

## 7.3 Students at Increased Risk

Extra precautions should be taken for students who may be more vulnerable to heat, including students with:

- Asthma or respiratory conditions
- Heart conditions
- Diabetes
- Certain medications
- Developmental or communication needs
- Limited mobility
- Prior heat illness
- Recent illness
- Limited acclimatization to heat

Staff should follow relevant health plans, emergency care plans, and instructions from parents or medical providers.

## 8. Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke Protocols

### 8.1 Air Quality Monitoring

The District should consider AirNow.gov, local air quality district information, local public health guidance, and site-level observations when determining whether to modify outdoor activities.

## 8.2 AQI Decision Framework

| <b>AQI</b>                                 | <b>Action</b>   |
|--|---|
| 0 to 50, Good                              | Outdoor activities may proceed as normal.   |
| 51 to 100, Moderate                        | Outdoor activities may proceed. Staff should monitor students with asthma or respiratory sensitivity.   |
| 101 to 150, Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | Outdoor activities may continue with modifications. Students with asthma, respiratory conditions, or other sensitivities should be offered indoor alternatives. Strenuous outdoor activity should be reduced. |
| 151 to 200, Unhealthy                      | Outdoor physical activities should be moved indoors, reduced, or canceled. Recess and PE should be held indoors when practical. Outdoor athletic practices should be canceled or moved indoors.               |
| 201 to 300, Very Unhealthy                 | Outdoor student activities should generally be canceled or moved indoors. Outdoor transitions should be minimized.  |
| 301 or higher, Hazardous                   | Outdoor student activities should generally be canceled. The District should follow guidance from public health and emergency agencies.   |

## 8.3 Visible Smoke or Poor Conditions

If smoke is visible, ash is falling, students report breathing difficulty, or staff observes unsafe conditions, site administrators may impose stricter limits than the AQI number alone would require.

## 9. Excessive Precipitation, Thunderstorms, and Lightning

Outdoor activities may be modified, moved indoors, postponed, or canceled during unsafe conditions such as rain, thunderstorms, or lightning.

Staff should move students indoors when:

- Lightning is seen (especially if repeated and/or nearby)
- Thunder is heard (especially if repeated and/or nearby)
- Heavy rain creates unsafe surfaces
- Standing water creates slip, drainage, or flooding hazards
- Visibility is reduced
- Weather alerts recommend sheltering indoors

Outdoor activities should not resume until the principal or designee determines conditions are safe. When lightning is present, outdoor activities should generally not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder.

## **10. Flooding and Localized Drainage Hazards**

Pioneer Union Elementary School District should monitor weather alerts and local agency notices during heavy precipitation or flood risk.

Site administrators should restrict access to:

- Flooded playground areas
- Standing water
- Drainage ditches
- Low-lying areas
- Areas near moving water
- Areas with damaged pavement, mud, debris, or erosion

Students should not be permitted to play in, walk through, or retrieve items from flooded areas or moving water.

If flooding affects arrival, dismissal, bus loading, pedestrian access, or safe operations, the site administrator should coordinate with the District Office.

## **11. High Wind, Falling Debris, and Unsafe Outdoor Conditions**

Outdoor activities may be modified, moved indoors, postponed, or canceled when wind creates unsafe conditions.

Unsafe conditions may include:

- Falling branches
- Blowing dust
- Flying debris
- Unstable shade structures
- Unsafe playground equipment
- Reduced visibility
- Power line concerns
- Tree hazards

Students should be moved indoors when high winds create a risk of injury.

## **12. Cold Weather**

Because Berry Creek is located in a mountain environment, cold weather conditions may occasionally impact school operations.

Factors to consider include:

- Temperature
- Wind chill
- Ice/snow formation
- Road conditions
- Snow accumulation

- Availability of appropriate clothing
- Student health needs

Staff should monitor students for shivering, numbness, pale skin, difficulty moving, or other signs of cold-related distress.

### **13. Indoor and Alternative Activities**

When outdoor activities are modified or canceled, sites should provide appropriate alternatives when feasible. These may include:

- Indoor recess
- Classroom movement activities
- Library or multipurpose room activities
- Low-intensity PE activities
- Health, fitness, or nutrition lessons
- Stretching or flexibility activities
- Walking activities in covered or indoor areas
- Board games, quiet games, or supervised structured play
- Modified expanded learning activities

The school site should identify available indoor or shaded spaces before the start of each school year.

## **14. Communication Protocols**

### **14.1 Internal Communication**

When outdoor activities are modified or canceled, the site administrator or designee should notify affected staff. Depending on the situation, this may include:

- Teachers/Staff
- Coaches
- Expanded learning staff
- Office/health staff
- Transportation staff
- Food service staff
- Maintenance and operations staff

Communication may occur by email, radio, phone, text message, intercom, staff messaging system, or in-person direction.

### **14.2 Parent and Guardian Communication**

When weather conditions substantially affect the school day, outdoor activities, athletics, field trips, expanded learning programs, dismissal procedures, or other significant operations, the District or site should, as appropriate, communicate with parents and guardians. Routine, short-term adjustments, such as holding recess indoors during typical rainy-day conditions, do

not require notification to parents or guardians unless there is a broader safety concern or a meaningful change to the school day.

Communication may be sent through ParentSquare, Aeries Communication, email, phone message, text message, website posting, or social media.

Parent communication should include:

- The weather conditions affecting the school or activity
- The action taken by the school
- Any change to the schedule, location, dismissal, practice, game, or event
- Any needed parent action
- A contact number for questions

### **14.3 Student Communication**

Students should be given age-appropriate guidance on weather-related changes, including staying hydrated, staying indoors, avoiding flooded areas and smoke exposure, and reporting symptoms of distress.

## **15. Field Trips and Off-Site Activities**

Before outdoor field trips or off-site activities, the trip supervisor should check weather conditions for the destination and travel route.

The District may modify, postpone, or cancel a field trip when extreme weather may affect student safety.

Field trip supervisors are expected to:

- Carry emergency contact information
- Have access to weather updates when practical
- Identify shaded or indoor shelter options
- Ensure students have water when conditions require it
- Follow this plan and any stricter guidance from the destination, public health agency, or emergency agency

## **16. Athletics and Sports Activities**

School-sponsored athletic practices, games, and conditioning activities should follow this plan unless stricter rules apply.

For activities governed by California Interscholastic Federation rules or other applicable athletic rules, staff should follow the stricter standard when a conflict exists between this plan and those rules.

Coaches are expected to:

- Monitor the weather before and during practice or competition
- Provide water breaks

- Modify intensity during heat or poor air quality
- Avoid punitive conditioning during high-risk weather
- Stop activity when students show signs of distress
- Report weather-related incidents to the site administrator

## **17. Staff Training**

The District should provide training or guidance to appropriate staff at least annually.

Training may include:

- Requirements of this plan
- Heat illness signs and response
- Air quality and wildfire smoke precautions
- Lightning and severe weather procedures
- Flooding and unsafe water hazards
- Communication expectations
- Indoor activity alternatives
- Emergency Response Procedure

Staff groups to be trained may include:

- Administrators
- Teachers/certificated staff
- Classified Aides
- Coaches
- Expanded learning staff
- Transportation staff
- Office and health staff
- Maintenance and operations staff

## **18. Coordination with Local Agencies**

The District may coordinate with local agencies and experts as needed, including:

- Butte County Public Health
- Butte County Office of Emergency Management
- Butte County Office of Education
- Local fire agencies
- Local law enforcement
- National Weather Service
- Local air quality management district
- California Department of Public Health
- California Department of Education
- California Interscholastic Federation, when applicable

## 19. Emergency Medical Response

If a student or staff member shows signs of serious weather-related illness or injury, staff are expected to take prompt action.

Call 911 for:

- Suspected heat stroke
- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion or altered mental status
- Seizure
- Severe breathing difficulty
- Chest pain
- Serious injury
- Any condition that appears life-threatening

While waiting for emergency responders, staff should follow first aid training and site emergency procedures.

For suspected heat illness, staff should move the person to a cooler location, remove excess clothing when appropriate, cool the person with available methods, and notify the office or health staff.

## 20. Documentation

Sites should document significant weather-related incidents using the Weather-Related Incident Documentation Log included as **Appendix A**.

Significant weather-related incidents may include:

- Student or staff illness or injury related to the weather
- Cancellation or relocation of major outdoor activities
- Emergency medical response
- Weather-related field trip cancellation
- Significant parent or guardian communication
- Unsafe facility condition caused by the weather
- Other weather-related conditions that substantially affect student safety or school operations

Documentation should be maintained by the site and shared with the District Office as appropriate.

## 21. Annual Review and Update

The District should review this plan at least annually.

The annual review may consider:

- Changes in law or guidance
- CDE or CDPH updates
- Local weather patterns
- Site feedback
- Incident reports
- Parent or staff feedback
- Facility needs
- Emergency agency recommendations

The Superintendent or designee may recommend revisions to the Board of Trustees when needed.

## 22. Board Adoption and Implementation

This plan is intended to be adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 18, 2026, and implemented across the District.

After adoption, the District should:

- Distribute the plan to site administrators
- Train appropriate staff
- Make the plan available to staff and families
- Incorporate the plan into related safety procedures
- Review the plan annually

## References

- California Education Code section 33355: [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=33355&lawCode=EDC](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=33355&lawCode=EDC)
- California Department of Education, Extreme Weather Guidelines: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/extremeweather.asp>
- National Weather Service HeatRisk: <https://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/heatrisk/>
- AirNow Air Quality Index: <https://www.airnow.gov/>
- California Department of Public Health, Extreme Heat Guidance: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/Extreme%20Heat.aspx>

**Appendix A**  
**Weather-Related Incident Log**

Use this form only when a weather-related condition causes a significant change, safety concern, injury, parent or guardian communication, or operational impact.

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity or Area Affected: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of What Happened:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian or District Office Notified, if applicable:

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Needed, if any:

\_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_