

# San Lorenzo Ruiz

## Hot Weather Guidelines

### “Be Safe... Be Cool!”

In order to protect the health and safety of school-aged children in Peel, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board in consultation with the Peel Health Department has developed guidelines for periods of extreme weather conditions. Weather extremes place children at risk for serious adverse health effects including frostbite, sunburn and skin cancer, in the future. In spring and summer, these guidelines address exposure to extreme heat and sunshine.

#### **SPRING/SUMMER - Exposure to Extreme Heat and Sunshine**

The main risk of hot spring and summer weather is that of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays which is a risk factor for the development of skin cancer and cataracts in later life. The UV index is the measure commonly used in Canada to assess the risk on a given day.

#### **What is the UV index?**

The UV index indicates the strength of the sun's UV rays under clear sky conditions. The index ranges in scale from 0 - 10. The higher the value of the index, the more intense the ultraviolet rays are.

The UV index may vary from day to day with changes in the ozone layer (the thinner the layer, the higher the index). Much larger variations occur as the UV changes with the seasons and time of day. The UV index is calculated daily by Environment Canada using ozone and weather information.

#### **What does the UV index mean?**

The UV index has become as common a guide to daily decision making as the temperature forecast. The following table explains how the index can be used in setting limits for sun exposure:

| <b>UV Index</b> | <b>Category</b> | <b>Sunburn Time</b>  |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Over 10         | Extreme         | Less than 15 minutes |
| 7 - 9           | High            | About 20 minutes     |
| 4 - 7           | Moderate        | About 30 minutes     |
| 0 - 4           | Low             | More than one hour   |

The typical mid-summer UV level for Peel is 8.0. The period of greatest risk is between May and August of each year.

## What is Humidex?

Humidex is a measure of how hot we feel. It is an equivalent temperature intended for the general public to express the combined effects of warm temperatures and humidity.

It provides a number that describes how hot people feel, much in the same way the equivalent chill temperature, or "wind chill factor," describes how cold people feel. Humidex is used as a measure of perceived heat that results from the combined effect of excessive humidity and high temperature.

The following are the humidex guidelines from Environment Canada:

| <b>Range of humidex</b> | <b>Degree of Discomfort</b>      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Less than 29 Celsius    | No discomfort                    |
| 30 to 39 Celsius        | Some discomfort                  |
| 40 to 45 Celsius        | Great discomfort; avoid exertion |
| Above 45 Celsius        | Dangerous                        |
| Above 54 Celsius        | Heat Stroke imminent             |

If humidex readings reach the mid to upper 30's, then certain outdoor activities, including recess and outdoor learning time, may be decreased or modified depending on factors such as age, health and physical condition. This could be achieved for example by having longer rest periods, shorter recess times or indoor recess if necessary.

### **Students: Preventative measures to avoid heat stress**

Students are encouraged to do the following in the event of high UV and/or high temperature/humidex:

- ***Bring plenty of clear fluids and utilize water fountains***
- ***Bring and use sunscreen (SPF 15 minimum)***
- ***Wear light, layered clothing including a hat while outdoors***
- ***Stay in shaded areas when possible and maintain activity level to a minimum***

*For more information, please see the attached "Hot Weather Guidelines" from Region of Peel Public Health.*