

Critical Bulletin

Senate Bill 1248: Protocols for Extreme Weather Conditions

[Senate Bill 1248](#) (Yahushua's Law) establishes new statewide requirements to better protect students during extreme weather conditions, with a particular focus on outdoor physical activity such as physical education, athletics, recess, and other school sponsored activities. The legislation recognizes the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events and seeks to ensure consistent, health protective decision-making across California schools.

SB 1248 required the [California Department of Education to issue statewide extreme weather guidelines](#) on or before January 01, 2026, after which local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to develop, adopt and implement (on or before July 01, 2026) weather protocols for extreme weather conditions during outdoor physical activities, including PE, recess, and sports, to protect student safety. The weather protocols shall align with and incorporate the standardized guidelines compiled by CDE (EC 33355) and shall detail the specific measures to be taken during extreme weather conditions.

What specific measures need to be taken during extreme weather conditions?

California Department of Education (CDE) has specified that LEAs shall detail the specific measures to be taken during extreme weather conditions, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- Clear criteria for determining when weather conditions are considered extreme weather conditions and warrant modification or cessation of outdoor physical activities.
- Procedures for monitoring weather forecasts and alerts to anticipate extreme weather conditions.
- Protocols for communicating with staff, pupils, and parents or guardians regarding changes to outdoor activities due to extreme weather conditions.
- Designation of indoor alternative activities that can be safely conducted during extreme weather conditions.
- Training for staff members on recognizing signs of weather-related distress in pupils and appropriate response measures.
- Coordination with relevant local agencies and experts to ensure timely access to weather-related information and resources.

Where can I find California Department of Education's statewide guidelines?

- [California Department of Education: Extreme Weather Guidelines](#)

These guidelines are designed to support local educational agencies in meeting Education Code section 33355 requirements and include statutory requirements under Education

Code section 33355, recommended best practices from the California Department of Public Health, and suggested considerations for local protocol development.

The guidance addresses a range of environmental hazards that may affect student health and safety, including extreme heat, poor air quality such as wildfire smoke, severe precipitation and flooding, and other hazardous environmental conditions, with particular emphasis on outdoor physical activities where students may be at heightened risk due to exertion, exposure duration, and limited access to cooling or shelter.

What must LEAs do when developing extreme weather protocols?

Local educational agencies (LEAs) are expected to follow and operationalize the California Department of Education's statewide guidelines. In addition, [Education Code section 33355 subdivision \(b\)\(2\)\(F\)](#) requires local educational agencies to clearly document the specific measures that will be taken during extreme weather conditions.

At a minimum, local protocols should address decision-making thresholds for modifying, relocating, or canceling outdoor physical activities; clearly defined roles and responsibilities of site administrators, coaches, teachers, and support staff; coordination with relevant local agencies and experts such as local public health departments, air quality management districts, and emergency management or weather services; procedures for accessing timely weather and air quality data; and communication protocols for notifying staff, students, and families when activities are modified or suspended. The intent is to ensure that decisions are proactive, consistent, and informed by credible data rather than reactive or ad hoc.

Does SB 1248 impact the District's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP)?

Senate Bill 1248 does not explicitly amend the Comprehensive School Safety Plan statutes or require a standalone revision to the Comprehensive School Safety Plan. Instead, it creates a separate statutory requirement under Education Code section 33355 that requires each local educational agency to develop and implement extreme weather protocols focused on student physical activity.

From a risk management and best-practice perspective, LEAs should anticipate that extreme weather protocols will be functionally integrated into broader school safety planning. Districts may choose to cross-reference or incorporate these protocols into relevant sections of the Comprehensive School Safety Plan, such as emergency procedures, environmental hazards, or site-specific response plans. While not legally required within the CSSP, alignment may reasonably be expected by fire marshals, auditors, or other oversight agencies and supports consistency, defensibility, and operational clarity.

When must LEAs implement these requirements?

Local educational agencies are required to develop, adopt and implement their own extreme weather protocols, aligned with the California Department of Education's statewide

guidelines, **by July 01, 2026**. Implementation expectations include formal adoption of protocols at the local educational agency level, application of those protocols during applicable weather events, and integration into ongoing school safety planning and operational procedures, including training, supervision, and activity planning. Local educational agencies should view this as an ongoing obligation rather than a one-time compliance task, particularly as climate conditions continue to evolve.

Why this matters for school districts?

Senate Bill 1248 elevates extreme weather from a discretionary operational issue to a defined student safety obligation. Failure to adopt or follow appropriate protocols may increase exposure to student injury or illness, parent and community concerns, compliance findings, and liability risk following adverse weather-related incidents. Proactive planning, clear documentation, and staff awareness will be critical to effective implementation.

Additional Considerations for LEAs

In addition to Education Code 33355 requirements and CDE guidance, LEAs should consider the following to support consistent implementation and student safety:

- **Decision authority:** Clearly define who may modify, relocate, or suspend outdoor activities.
- **Scope:** Apply protocols consistently to PE, recess, athletics, extracurricular, and school-sponsored activities.
- **Vulnerable students:** Account for students with medical conditions, IEPs, 504 plans, or other health needs.
- **Staff readiness:** Ensure staff are trained to recognize weather-related health risks and required response actions.
- **Communication:** Establish clear procedures for notifying staff, students, and families of activity changes.
- **Facilities:** Assess indoor alternatives, shade, cooling, hydration, air filtration, and site limitations.
- **Documentation:** Document decisions and periodically review and update protocols.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- CSRM SLC: Extreme Weather Toolkit (please reach out to your Risk Consultant for access)
- [California Department of Education: Extreme Weather Guidelines](#)
- [CA Interscholastic Federation: Extreme Heat and Air Quality Policy](#)
- [Cal OES: School Emergency Planning and Safety](#)
- [CalHeatScore: Tool](#)
- [California Department of Health: Grid for Heat Risk](#)
- [AQMD - School Air Quality Activity Recommendations](#)
- [CDE - Guidelines for Schools and Wildfire Smoke - School Outdoor Air Quality Activity Recommendations](#)
- [National Weather Service: HeatRisk Tool](#)
- [Perry Weather – Monitoring System](#)

Questions? Please contact California Schools Risk Management (909) 763-4900 or slc@csjpa.org

This California Schools Risk Management JPA Critical Bulletin is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.