

Heatwave Policy

Status	Non-statutory
Review cycle	Every 2 years
Date written/last reviewed	February 2026
Date of next review	February 2028
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Name of Chair of Governors	Christina Powell / Melissa Shaw
Published on website	Yes

Temperatures both outdoors and indoors may rise to such an extent that precautions to prevent pupils suffering from heat stress or heat exhaustion may need to be taken.

This policy is based on the government guidance Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals (2023). It also forms part of the schools Climate Action Plan. It sets out a list of simple measures to reduce the impact to health of exposure from severe heat and the steps the school will take to protect the health and the wellbeing of the staff and its pupils.

This advice should be followed during periods of hot weather, but it is particularly important if a Level Amber or Red Heatwave Alert is announced (see Appendix 1). In the event of such an alert, health organisations and local authorities will be notified by the Meteorological Office.

Definition of a Heatwave

The Met Office defines a heatwave as at least three consecutive days of temperatures above what would normally be expected from that time of the year. The threshold is different for each county, depending on where they are in the country, and it is usually accompanied by high humidity. The heatwave temperature threshold for London is 28 °C

RISKS FROM HEAT

Heat Stress

School staff should look out for signs of heat stress and heat exhaustion.

People suffering from heat stress will show general signs of discomfort (including those listed below for heat exhaustion). These signs will worsen with physical activity or if left untreated and can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- irritability
- fatigue
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- hot, red and dry skin
- confusion

Heatstroke

Sweating is an essential means of cooling and once this stops a person is at serious risk of developing heatstroke. Heatstroke can develop if heat exhaustion or heat stress is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning. Signs of heatstroke include:

- high body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C is a major sign of heatstroke
- red, hot and sweating that then suddenly stops
- fast heartbeat

- fast shallow breathing
- confusion/lack of co-ordination
- fits
- loss of consciousness

If a person is suffering from heat related illness these are the steps that should be taken. If they have lost consciousness, then place them in the recovery position before following these steps.

1. Move the person to as cool a room (air-conditioned room) as possible and encourage them to drink cool water.
2. Cool the person as rapidly as possible, using whatever method you can. For example, sponge or spray the person with cool (25 to 30 degrees) not cold water. If available, place cold packs around the neck and in the armpits or wrap the children in a cool, wet sheet and assist cooling with a fan.
3. Contact parents if concerned about a child
4. Dial 999 to request an ambulance if the person doesn't respond to the treatment above within 30 minutes or if you have concerns.

HEATWAVE PLAN

Keep the environment cool:

- All non-essential lights and electrical equipment which, when left on, or in 'standby' mode, generates heat, will be turned off.
- Classrooms will use electric fans if temperatures are below 35°C and not air conditioned.
- Indoor thermometers will be used to ensure that room temperatures are monitored regularly during the hottest parts of the day.
- To the extent possible, cool rooms will be ready and consistently at 26ºC or below.
- Windows and other ventilation openings will be opened during the cool of early morning to allow stored heat to escape from the building.
- Windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors. This should help keep rooms cool whilst allowing adequate ventilation.
- Indoor blinds will be used but they should not block ventilation openings or windows.

Stay out of the heat:

- On very hot days (i.e. where temperatures are in excess of 30°C), pupils should not take part in vigorous physical activity.
- Pupils playing outdoors will be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible and additional shade will be provided by gazebos.
- Pupils will be encouraged to wear their PE kits during a heatwave and hats of a closed construction with wide brims.
- Thin clothing or sun-cream should be used to protect skin if pupils are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes.
- Newsletters will be sent to parents highlighting the need for appropriate clothing, footwear and sun screen, and the importance of sun safety awareness.
- On very hot days, the lunch time break may be shortened.
- PE lessons may be adapted or re-scheduled for cooler times of the day.

- Parents and pupils will be encouraged to apply sun scream before they attend school. The school has sun cream located within each phase that can be applied onto a pupil's skin and then pupils have the responsibility of rubbing it in. Pupils are not able to share sun cream due to allergies.

Cooling down:

- Pupils will be encouraged to bring water bottles to school and they will be reminded to drink often.
- Pupils will be provided with plenty of cool water and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot. Pupils and staff will have access to water coolers located throughout the school.
- Pupils will be reminded about sun safety in class and assemblies.
- Pupils may wear their PE kits and hats of a closed construction with wide brims.

Sun protection

SunSmart is the national skin cancer prevention campaign run by Cancer Research UK. The SunSmart schools initiative encourages nurseries and pre-schools to develop and adopt sun protection policies. They are part of a broader campaign communicating effective skin cancer prevention messages to the general public.

The five key SunSmart skin cancer prevention messages can be promoted by using the SMART code:

S tay in the shade 11-3

M ake sure you never burn

A lways cover up – wear a t-shirt, hat and wraparound sunglasses

R emember children burn more easily

T hen use at least factor 15+ sunscreen

Protecting staff

We take the well-being of our staff very seriously and as such during a heatwave they will be

- Encouraged to leave the building as soon as practicable at the end and start of the school day
- Reorganise planned on site after school events
- Consider use of rooms which are less susceptible to higher temperatures. The coolest rooms are located in the Nursery building which is air-conditioned.

Major events

If the school is holding a major event involving a significant number of people during a heatwave, the guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hot-weather-advice-mass-gatherings-and-planning-events will be followed. The main points covered in this guidance are:

- Identifying hot weather as a potential risk in event risk assessments and ensuring plans are

in place to reduce the impact of hot weather
- Providing adequate drinking water throughout the event in line with potable water and food hygiene plans
- Having a plan in place to increase shaded areas
- Planning activities at times of the day when it is cooler such as the morning or evening and advising attendees to stay out of the sun at the hottest time of the day between 11am and 3pm and use shaded areas.
- Ensuring good public communications on to how to reduce the risk associated with hot weather during the event and ensuring plans are in place to make changes to the event should there be extremely hot weather forecast

Fires

Because of the increased risk of conflagration, in the run-up towards, during and for an appropriate period after a heatwave:

- Pupils are taught about the dangers of fires
- No staff member involved in Learning Outside the Classroom including Forest school Club permits any fire-utilising activities or activities that may indirectly be incendiary.

APPENDIX TO THE HOT WEATHER PROTOCOL

Level 1: Green — Summer preparedness and long-term planning
This is the minimum state of vigilance during the summer. During this time social and healthcare services will ensure that all awareness and background preparedness work is ongoing.

Advice: If you want more information about hot weather and your health please visit www.nhs.uk. If you are concerned about your health or somebody you care for, please contact NHS Direct on 111 or your local pharmacist.

Level 2: Yellow — Alert and readiness
Triggered as soon as the risk is 60% or above for threshold temperatures being reached in one or more regions on at least two consecutive days and the intervening night. This is an important stage for social and healthcare services who will be working to ensure readiness and swift action to reduce harm from a potential heatwave.

Advice: Heatwaves can be dangerous, especially for the very young, very old or those with chronic diseases.
If you want more information about hot weather and your health please visit www.nhs.uk. If you are concerned about your health or somebody you care for, please contact NHS Direct on 111, or your local pharmacist.

Level 3: Amber — Heatwave action
Triggered when the Met Office confirms threshold temperatures for one or more regions have been reached for one day and the following night, and the forecast for the next day is greater than 90% confidence that the day threshold will be met. This stage requires social and healthcare services to target specific actions at high-risk groups.

Advice: Heatwaves can be dangerous, especially for the very young, very old or those with chronic diseases.
If you want more information about hot weather and your health please visit www.nhs.uk. If you are concerned about your health or somebody you care for, please contact NHS Direct on 111 or your local pharmacist.

Level 4: Red — Emergency
Reached when a heatwave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside the health and social care system. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy, and not just in high-risk groups.

Advice: Stay out of the sun. Keep your home as cool as possible — shutting windows during the day may help. Open them when it is cooler at night. Keep drinking fluids. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do.

Poster displayed in the Medical Room

