

HEAT WAVE POLICY



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During this period of very hot weather, we are already taking actions to protect children and staff. We are experiencing a level 3 heatwave alert and the Met Office has issued an **Amber Extreme Heat Warning (Medium Likelihood of High Impacts)**, a rare amber warning about extreme heat at the beginning of the week beginning 18th July to cover the potential impacts from the high temperatures including a danger to life. These could include **health impacts** on the most vulnerable in our society including those with pre-existing medical conditions, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, but it can also lead to heatstroke and heat exhaustion even on those who are normally fit and healthy.

Should the temperature further rise as predicted, in response to the additional risks from this heat, we are taking the following measures, (some of which are already in place):

- children will not take part in vigorous physical activity
- when children are outdoors, they will be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible
- for the remainder of the summer term children will be able to wear their PE kit
- children should wear loose clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) before children come to school
- children will have access to plenty of water and be encouraged to drink more than usual
- staff are encouraged to wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and encouraged to drink more water than usual

Which children are likely to be most affected by high temperatures?

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies.

- Those who are overweight or who are taking medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects
- Children under 4 years of age are also at increased risk
- Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to temperature extremes
- Children with sensory and emotional regulation needs

Health risks from heat

Children cannot control their body temperature as efficiently as adults during hot weather because they do not sweat as much and so can be at risk of ill-health from heat. Heat-related illness can range from mild heat stress to potentially life-threatening heatstroke. The main risk from

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heat is dehydration (not having enough water in the body). If sensible precautions are taken children are unlikely to be adversely affected by hot conditions, however, teachers, assistants, school nurses and all child carers should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke

Heat stress

Children suffering from heat stress may seem out of character or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including those listed below for heat exhaustion). These signs will worsen with physical activity and if left untreated can lead to heat exhaustion or heatstroke

Heat exhaustion

Symptoms of heat exhaustion vary but include one or more of the following:

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

Heatstroke

When the body is exposed to very high temperatures, the mechanism that controls body temperature may stop working. Heatstroke can develop if heat stress or heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning.

Symptoms of heatstroke may include:

- high body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F) is a major sign of heatstroke
- red, hot skin and sweating that then suddenly stops
- fast heartbeat
- fast shallow breathing
- confusion/lack of co-ordination
- fits
- loss of consciousness

Actions to protect children suffering from heat illness

The following steps to reduce body temperature should be taken immediately:

1. Move the child to as cool a room as possible and encourage them to drink cool water (such as water from a cold tap).
2. Cool the child as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods you can. For example, sponge or spray the child with cool (25 to 30°C) water – if available, place cold packs around the neck and armpits, or wrap the child in a cool, wet sheet and assist cooling with a fan.
3. Dial 999 to request an ambulance if the person doesn't respond to the above treatment within 30 minutes.

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Note: If a child loses consciousness, or has a fit, place the child in the recovery position, call 999 immediately and follow the steps above until medical assistance arrives.

Amber warning of extreme heat; current (refer to date) / last (refer to date)

Areas affected: East Midlands | East of England | London & Southeast England | North East England | North West England | South West England | Wales | West Midlands | Yorkshire & Humber

Starts: 00:00 BST on Sun 17 July 2022 **Ends:** 23:59 BST on Mon 18 July

Exceptionally high temperatures are possible during Sunday and Monday and could lead to widespread impacts on people and infrastructure - Population- wide adverse health effects are likely to be experienced, not limited to those most vulnerable to extreme heat, leading to potential serious illness or danger to life. Government advice is that 999 services should be used in emergencies only; seek advice from 111 if you need non-emergency health advice.

Substantial changes in working practices and daily routines likely to be required. Significantly more people are likely to visit coastal areas, lakes and rivers leading to increased risk of water safety incidents. Delays on roads and road closures are possible, along with delays and cancellations to rail and air travel, with potential for significant welfare issues for those who experience even moderate delays

Government guidance about actions in response to a heatwave:

- [Heatwave Plan for England: Protecting health and reducing harm from severe heat and heatwaves \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settings-during-heatwaves-for-teachers-and-professionals>

General key public health messages

- **Stay out of the heat**
 - keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
 - if you must go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf
 - avoid extreme physical exertion
 - wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes
- **Cool yourself down**
 - have plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
 - eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high-water content
 - take a cool shower, bath or body wash
 - sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck
- **Keep your environment cool**
 - keeping your living space cool is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who can't look after themselves
 - keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day

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- turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat

Note: Be alert and call a doctor if someone is unwell or further help is needed. If someone has a health problem

School Dog

1. Keep dog in designated dog area during the core day
2. Check regularly to ensure that water is available, and air is flowing with windows open
3. Allow only 5 minutes of gentle exercise
4. Do not walk the dog between 10am and 3.30pm
5. Slow walks in the shade must be taken outside of the core day
6. Take ice from the fridge if excessive panting is identified and add them to the dog's bowl
7. Wet a towel for the dog to lie on if the dog is struggling to cool down
8. If the dog is breathing unusually, is excessively lethargic or has a blue tinge to their tongue or lips contact the vet immediately
9. Move the dog to the shade, offer small amounts of water, wet a towel and cool the dog whilst emergency veterinarian advice is sought
10. Ensure a named person is responsible for checking on the dog