



04 Health procedures

04.10 Hot Weather Guidance

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; especially those under 4 years of age.

Children cannot control their body temperature less efficiently during hot weather and so can be at risk of ill-health from heat and could suffer heat-related illness. Staff will be looking out for signs of this. If sensible precautions are taken children and adults are less likely to be affected by hot conditions. The main risk from heat is dehydration (not having enough water in the body).

Due to the above health risks parents / carers may choose for their child not to attend preschool due to extreme heat.

In our pre-school we acknowledge the importance of sun protection and want staff and children to enjoy the sun safely. During periods of high temperature we will work with staff and parents to achieve this in a variety of ways laid out in this policy.

We obtain parents/carers permission for staff to supervise and assist children to apply sunscreen supplied by parents/carers, if required, during the summer months.

We consider sun protection when planning all outdoor activities from April to September (the sun is strongest at this time of year).

Prevention - Outdoors

- We encourage children to sit/play in the shade where it is available.
- We ensure that our Sun Sail is well maintained and is in place as soon as the weather starts to warm up, usually in April.
- Children are required to wear hats that cover the ears, face and neck
- children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- During warm sunny weather, we remind parents to apply sun cream prior to attending preschool.
- Children need to bring in their own clearly labelled bottle of sunscreen, at least factor 15+.
- We do not supply sunscreen to children due to the possibilities of allergies.
- children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- provide children with plenty of water (such as individual drink bottles and water from a cold tap) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

Prevention indoors

- open windows as early as possible in the morning before children arrive, or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building – it is important to check insurance conditions and the need for security if windows are to be left open overnight
- almost close windows when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep the heat out while allowing adequate ventilation
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum

- oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C – at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration
- encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water

Health risks from Heat

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.

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.

Preschool Closure due to extreme heat

The [Met Office](#) issues weather warnings when severe weather has the potential to impact the UK. We will use this site to assess the possible impact of extreme heat on the day to day running of preschool. If an Amber Warning is issued preschool may need to follow the emergency closure procedure.

Supporting information

Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals – Gov.uk