



Merley First School

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Dear Parent/Carers

A Heat Health Alert was Issued on Wednesday 13 July 2022. There is a 90% probability of heat-health alert criteria being met between 9am on Saturday and 9pm on Tuesday in parts of England. The hot weather could increase the health risks to vulnerable patients. Please click [here](#) for the Government guidance.

We have reviewed our school systems and will be putting the following into place:

- For Friday 15th, Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th July we are happy for children to come to school in either school uniform or school PE kit, whichever is cooler for your child
- All pupils must come to school with their own water bottle. Children will be given time to ensure that these are topped up throughout the day with frequent reminders to drink plenty of water
- Sunhats to be brought into school and will be worn when going outside
- PE lessons will not include vigorous physical exercise in the sunshine
- Break times during the morning will be 15 minutes for each year group to be in the nature area to ensure they can play in the shaded and cooler part of the grounds
- Lunch play will be outside in the shaded parts of the school field only. Additional resources such as colouring and books will be taken outside for the children to enjoy and reduce physical activity in the midday heat
- Water bottles will be taken with the child for any outdoor activity
- Each class are timetabled to use parts of the school which are air conditioned such as computer suite and school hall

We will continue to monitor the weather over the next few days and make adjustments as necessary.

The following information from the Government guidance has been provided to help keep ourselves and others safe during the hot weather.

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 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 coordination
- 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.
4. 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.

Protecting children outdoors

During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

- children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- encourage children playing outdoors to stay in the shade as much as possible
- children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- use sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes
- provide children with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

Protecting children indoors

During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

- 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
- use outdoor sun awnings if available, or close indoor blinds or curtains, but do not let them block window ventilation
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum
- switch off all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers when not in use – equipment should not be left in 'standby mode' as this generates heat
- if possible, use those classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children

- 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
- if necessary, consider rearranging school start, finish, and play times to avoid teaching during very hot conditions
- encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water

Thank you for your understanding. If you have any specific concerns about your child and the heat wave , please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Best Wishes,



Katharine Anstey
Headteacher