

Tuesday, 12 July 2022

Dear Parents / Carers

Responding to very high temperatures at school

Over the past few days, the weather has been incredibly hot and there are even higher temperatures forecast in the coming days. We remain in frequent contact with the Health and Safety Team from the Local Authority, who are proactively sending information to us.

At the moment, there is no suggestion of closing schools. Should this change, we will inform you at the earliest possible opportunity. The first part of this letter outlines the actions we are taking to help keep children safe in this heat. Links from guidance received today are included at the bottom of the letter that may be of help to you and your family.

Who is most vulnerable to adverse effects from heat exposure?

Vulnerable groups include older people (65 years of age and above), the very young (under 5 years of age) and people with pre-existing medical conditions. Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those under 4 years of age, who are overweight, or who are taking certain medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects. Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to high temperatures.

During this time, at Kingsway School, we will:

Reduce time in the sun and the impact of the sun:

- the children will stay out of the sun during the hottest parts of the day: lunchtime breaks will be shortened and children will not be allowed outside if the weather is too hot
- children must come to school with strong (approx. Factor 20+) sun cream. They should bring the bottle with them so they can reapply this themselves during the day as directed by their teacher.

Avoid becoming too hot in the first place:

- strenuous activities will be minimised and replaced with calmer, quieter activities
- additional fans have been purchased for classrooms
- electrical equipment will be turned off if not in use
- ventilation will be varied to maximise cooling of rooms (based on information below)

Wearing appropriate clothing:

- children and staff will be encouraged to wear light, cotton materials that cover the body – they should choose clothes that make them feel comfortable
- boys are encouraged to wear shorts if they have them and feel comfortable wearing them
- both boys and girls can wear footwear that is most comfortable: where possible, children may like to wear sandals but these **must** fasten at the heel so they secure around the foot

Stay hydrated:

- all children should bring a drinks bottle to school with them. Some like to bring very cold water with them to school to help keep them cool in the day
- Drinks bottles will be refilled at points throughout the day and children will have these to hand at all times
- Children will be asked to keep an eye on the colour of their wee. If it is becoming a dark orange, they are dehydrated. It should be the colour of straw.

We will be alert to any signs or symptoms of heat on health:

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 and heatstroke are two potentially serious conditions that can occur if you get too hot.

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

If we notice a child who shows these symptoms we will:

- call for medical help and call you and, at the same time:
- get them to lie down in a cool place
- remove any unnecessary clothing to expose as much of their skin as possible
- cool their skin with cool water, using a cool wet sponge or flannel, cool water spray, cold packs around the neck and armpits
- fan their skin while it's moist – this will help the water to evaporate, which will help their skin cool down
- get them to drink water
- not give them aspirin or paracetamol derived medications – this can put the body under more strain, they will carry on taking all other prescribed medicines unless advised not to by a medical professional
- stay with the person until they're feeling better. Most people should start to recover within 30 minutes



All our policies are updated and are on the website.

Other considerations beyond school:

Environmental - wildfires

- The risks of wildfire during a heatwave can be greater because the vegetation including grass, trees and bushes will be drier than usual. We have been informed of a number of anti-social behaviour incidents in which fires have been set deliberately within the Kingsway area. Should you observe any such behaviour, we suggest you inform the Police immediately.

Swimming:

During warm weather cooling off in swimming pools or bodies of water such as rivers, lakes or the sea can provide much welcomed relief. While this can be a fun activity on warm days, people who do not take the right precautions may find themselves in difficult situations.

Whether you are an experienced swimmer or not, there are simple principles you should follow when swimming:

- always look for warning and guidance signs
- only enter the water in areas with adequate supervision and rescue cover
- always wear a buoyancy aid or lifejacket for activities on the water or at the water's edge (such as when boating or fishing)
- be aware of underwater hazards
- get out of the water as soon as you start to feel cold
- swim parallel with the shore, not away from it
- avoid drifting in the currents
- do not enter fast flowing water
- always take someone with you when you go into or near water. If something goes wrong they will be able to get help *if someone is in difficulty in the water shout reassurance to them, shout for help and call the emergency services (call 999 or 112)

Get help. Call NHS 111 or in an emergency 999

If a person has improved with the cooling advice above but you still have concerns about them, contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

- You should call 999 for an ambulance if the person:
- doesn't respond to the above cooling treatments within 30 minutes
- has severe symptoms, such as a loss of consciousness, confusion or seizures
- If the person is unconscious, you should follow the steps above and place them in the recovery position until help arrives. If they have a seizure, move nearby objects out of the way to prevent injury.

Further information can be sourced from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074023/Heat wave Plan for England 2022 May-2022-v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074023/Heat_wave_Plan_for_England_2022_May-2022-v2.pdf)

<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>

Yours sincerely



Mr Pajak



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Mental Health
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Healthy Schools

Let's help every child
thrive



All our policies are updated and are on the website.