

WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

WEATHER - EXTREME HEAT POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to reduce the risk of harmful effects of extreme heat on the children, staff and visitors of the school when temperatures, both indoors and outdoors, rise to a level that could affect the health and wellbeing of the children, staff and visitors. Our aim is to ensure a planned, managed and effective response to an extreme heat event.

High temperatures both outdoors and indoors may harm children's health. In the event of a heatwave alert, local authorities will be alerted by the Met Office, and the alert will be more widely publicised. The advice given here focuses specifically on children and is provided for teachers and others looking after children.

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those under four 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. Support staff should be made aware of the risks and how to manage them.

What are the 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 will look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

All staff will adhere to the following:

- Keep children hydrated constantly by offering them water to drink all day long.
- Encourage children to eat normally.
- Encourage parents/carers to dress their children in light loose clothing rather than long sleeve tops or trousers.
- Maintain close observations on children at all times and in particular during times of rest, looking out for signs of heat stress and heat exhaustion.

Indoors:

- Windows and other ventilation should be open at all times.
- When children are sleeping, doors should not be closed at any point and windows should be left open to allow ventilation.
- Windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors.
- Keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum.
- Ensure regular temperature checks are carried out and recorded throughout the day.
- Thermometers: Note there are no specific maximum legal temperatures.

Outdoors:

- Avoid vigorous physical activities especially in the non-shaded parts of the garden.
- Sun hats are to be worn at all times - wide brim hats are preferable.
- Sun cream should be used to protect children from getting burnt.
- Avoid spending long periods of time in the direct sun by encouraging children to stay in the shade as much as possible.
- Children to be kept indoors during the hottest parts of the day.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IF HEAT STRESS OR HEAT EXHAUSTION IS SUSPECTED

Heat Stress:

Children 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.

Signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Hot, red and dry skin

Heatstroke:

Sweating is an essential means of cooling and once this stops a child 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.

The following steps to reduce body temperature will be taken immediately.

- Move the child to a cool area.
- Sponge the child with cool (not cold) water over their body and if available place cold packs just around the neck and in the armpits.
- Place the child near a fan.

If a child shows signs of confusion, follow the steps above. If a child loses consciousness, place the child in the recovery position and follow the steps above.

In both cases call 999 or 112 for emergency medical assistance.

STAFF AND VISITORS HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Keep hydrated by constantly drinking water.
- Continue to eat normally
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms for heat exhaustion and heatstroke and if you start to experience any of these inform either the Head of School /Assistant to the Head of School.

(A signed policy is available upon request)

This policy was adopted on dated: 1st March 2016

Date Reviewed: 01-09-2024

To be reviewed: 01-09-2025