

Guidance for those looking after schoolchildren and those in early years settings during heatwaves

The Heatwave Plan 2022 is activated during 1st June till 15th September, and whilst we are currently on Level 1, Getting Ready for Summer, it is vital to prepare your teaching and support staff by sharing this guidance, so they know what to do in very hot weather. With the UK (and Lancashire) experiencing an extended spell of warm weather, it is vital to protect and support children who are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of even warmer conditions should a heatwave be forecasted. Some children with disabilities or complex health needs, may be more susceptible to high temperatures.

Some points for consideration are:

Outdoors:

- on very hot days (that is, where temperatures are in excess of 30°C) children should not take part in vigorous physical activity
- children playing outdoors should be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible
- loose, light-coloured clothing should be worn to help children keep cool and hats of a closed construction with wide brims should be worn to avoid sunburn
- thin clothing or sun screen should be used to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes
- children must be provided with plenty of cool water and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot
- the temperature of water supplied from the cold tap is adequate for this purpose

Indoors:

- windows and other ventilation openings should be opened during the cool of early morning or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building – it is important to be safe check insurance conditions and the need for security if windows are to be left open overnight
- windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep rooms cool whilst allowing adequate ventilation
- use outdoor sun awnings if available, or indoor blinds, but do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum during heatwaves
- all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers should be switched off when not in use and should not be left in ‘standby mode’ – electrical equipment, when left on, or in ‘standby’ mode generates 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. Further details on how to protect children from heat related illness can be found [here](#).