

Hot Weather and Sun Safety Policy

Aspire Federation

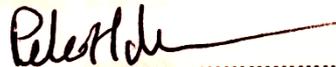
'Let your light shine!'



Reviewed and updated: November 2023

Next review: November 2026 (unless Government policy changes)

Signed: 

Signed: 

Name: Laura Martin
(Executive Headteacher)

Name: Peter Hilton
(Chair of Governors)

Date: ...13.12.23.....

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Headteachers, Governors and the LA have a responsibility to ensure that staff and pupils are able to work and learn in a safe environment.

Currently there is no statutory upper limit specified in UK Health and Safety Law for a maximum permissible temperature in the workplace, however, there is a legal requirement contained within the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 which applies to employees:

“During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable”.

Although not specifically covered by the regulations, a general duty of care is owed to pupils and so similar standards will apply to those for employees.

Protection from exposure to the sun is also an issue the school must consider for both pupils and staff. As an employer the school has an obligation to protect staff from exposure and this is extended to pupils in our care – reference document - <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>

The aim of this Hot Weather and Sun Safety Policy is to protect children and staff from skin damage caused by the effects of ultraviolet radiation from the sun and to ensure that staff and pupils are able to work and learn in a safe environment.

The main elements of this policy are:

- Protection: providing an environment that enables pupils and staff to stay safe in the sun
- Partnership: working with parents/carers, governors, the LA and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety and promote a healthy school.
- Planning: ensuring the school is prepared for hot weather and staff and pupils are kept safe
- The Aspire Federation Schools believe in sun safety to ensure that children and staff are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultra-violet rays in sunlight.

As part of the Hot Weather and Sun Safety policy, we will:

- Encourage children to wear clothes that provide good sun protection
- Hold outdoor activities in areas of shade whenever possible and encourage children to use shady areas during playtime, lunchtime, sports and trips
- Encourage staff and parents to act as good role models by practising sun safety – e.g.: wearing sun cream and hats
- Regularly remind children, staff and parents about sun safety through newsletters, parents meetings and activities for pupils
- Ensure the Hot Weather and Sun Safety policy is working. We will regularly monitor our curriculum, assess shade provision, and review the sun safety behaviour of children and staff (use of hats, shade, etc.)

- Make provisions for the school buildings to be prepared for periods of hot weather and have workable measures in place before a Heat wave is forecast.

A system called “Heat-Health Watch” operates between 1st June and 15th September and is based on Met office forecasts. There are four trigger levels which will action a response from the Department of Health and other bodies. The “Heat-Health Watch” can be monitored on the Met Office website www.metoffice.gov.uk

The four trigger levels for response are:

- 1) Level 1 Awareness – the minimum state of vigilance, both before and during this period, preparedness must be enhanced and maintained by the measures set out in the heat wave plan.
- 2) Level 2 Alert – this is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts threshold temperatures for at least three days ahead in any one region, or that there is an 80% chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. At this level a broadcast will be made on television and radio weather reports.
- 3) Level 3 Heat wave – this is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more.
- 4) Level 4 Emergency – this is reached when a heat wave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, such as power or water shortages and/or where the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened.

The Executive Headteacher and Head of School is responsible for ensuring the elements of the Heat wave Plan are implemented when and if appropriate.

Heat wave Plan:

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 – on days where temperatures are approximately 24°C, children will only have a maximum of 10 minutes of active playtime at lunch time and will then remain in the shade for the rest of this break. If temperatures exceed this, children will need to remain in the shade for the whole of the lunch break period
- children should wear loose and lightweight clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- children should have sunscreen (at least factor 15 with 4 or 5 stars UVA protection) applied before coming into school to protect skin if children. Named bottles of sunscreen can be brought into school for children to re-apply themselves, with supervision where necessary, before the lunch break. Members of staff will not apply

sunscreen to children. Children, unless siblings and with the consent of parents/carers, must not share sunscreen.

- Children should ensure they have a water bottle in school and will be encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot. Water bottles can be refilled at school as often as is required.

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
- 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
- Consider moving lessons outside into shaded areas, for example in the shade provided by the trees, or in the outdoor classroom
- encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water

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 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 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:

Move the child to as cool a room as possible and encourage them to drink cool water (such as water from a cold tap).

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.

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.