Bathampton Primary School
Heatwave - risk assessment, July 2022

During this period of very hot weather, we are already taking actions to protect children and staff. We are experiencing a level 3 heatwave alert and the Met Office has issued an **Amber Extreme Heat Warning (Medium Likelihood of High Impacts),** a rare amber warning about extreme heat at the beginning of the week beginning 18 July to cover the potential impacts from the high temperatures including a danger to life. These could include **health impacts** on the most vulnerable in our society including those with pre-existing medical conditions, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, but it can also lead to heatstroke and heat exhaustion even on those who are normally fit and healthy.

Should the temperature further rise as predicted. In response to the additional risks from this heat, we are taking the following measures, some of which are already in place:

- children will not take part in vigorous physical activity
- when children are outdoors, they will be encouraged 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
- parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) before children come to school
- children will have access to plenty of water and be encouraged to drink more than usual
- staff are encouraged to wear loose, clothing to help keep cool and encouraged to drink more water than usual
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Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies.

- Those who are overweight or who are taking medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects
- Children under 4 years of age are also at increased risk
- Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to temperature extremes.

Within the school we will:

- reduce the time children are outside

- open windows as early as possible in the morning before children arrive to allow stored heat to escape from the building
- 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
- where possible, use spaces which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
- encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water •
- expect to stay open

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 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:

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.

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.

Amber warning of extreme heat
Areas affected: East Midlands | East of England | London & South East England | North East England | North West England | South West England | Wales | West Midlands | Yorkshire & Humber

Starts: 00:00 BST on Sun 17 July
Ends: 23:59 BST on Mon 18 July

Exceptionally high temperatures are possible during Sunday and Monday and could lead to widespread impacts on people and infrastructure - Population-wide adverse health effects are likely to be experienced, not limited to those most vulnerable to extreme heat, leading to potential serious illness or danger to life. Government advice is that 999 services should be used in emergencies only; seek advice from 111 if you need non-emergency health advice. - Substantial changes in working practices and daily routines likely to be required - Significantly more people are likely to visit coastal areas, lakes and rivers leading to increased risk of water safety incidents - Delays on roads and road closures are possible, along with delays and cancellations to rail and air travel, with potential for significant welfare issues for those who experience even moderate delays

Government guidance about actions in response to a heatwave:

- Heatwave Plan for England: Protecting health and reducing harm from severe heat and heatwaves (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settingshttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settings-during-heatwaves-for-teachers-and-professionalsduring-heatwaves-for-teachers-and-professionals

General key public health messages

- Stay out of the heat
  - keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
  - if you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf - avoid extreme physical exertion
  - wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes
- Cool yourself down
  - have plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
  - eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high-water content
  - take a cool shower, bath or body wash
  - sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck
- Keep your environment cool
  - keeping your living space cool is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who can't look after themselves
  - keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day
  - turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat

Be alert and call a doctor if someone is unwell or further help is needed If someone has a health problem