

GARSTANG ST THOMAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

POLICY: SAFETY IN WARM WEATHER

At Garstang St Thomas School we understand the dangers of the sun and heat for children and staff. We will work with staff, children and parents/carers to ensure school life continues safely in periods of warmer weather.

EDUCATION

- Alongside work in class, we will talk about how to be careful in the sun/heat in worship times in the summer term.
- Parents/carers will be given information on the school newsletter explaining what the school is doing about sun protection and how they can help.
- Staff will be given information/ reminders and support in periods of warm weather.

PROTECTION FROM THE SUN

Shade:

When the sun is strong we will encourage children to sit/play in the shade where it is available; this includes outdoor classrooms and in areas under trees.

Timetabling:

When the sun is strong, staff will work to limit time in the sun taking into account time outside at lunchtime. Teachers will also plan, when possible, to run outdoor activities before 11am and after 2pm.

Clothing:

Parents/carers are encouraged to send a hat for their child to wear when outside in warm weather. Staff will encourage children to wear their hats.

Sunscreen:

Parents/carers are asked to apply sunscreen before school in warm weather. Parents/carers are also asked to provide a labelled sunscreen for their child (stick or lotion but not spray versions).

When the sun is strong, staff will provide children with the opportunity to reapply sunscreen before lunchtime. In our nursery, our staff apply sunscreen to the children around lunchtime.

PROTECTION FROM THE HEAT

Eating and drinking:

Children will be encouraged to bring their own labelled water bottle to school which they can drink and fill up as required in class. This water bottle is in addition to the drink at lunchtime. Children will be encouraged to eat normally.

N.B. nursery children are provided with water/milk in cups and do not require a water bottle.

Activities:

Activities will be changed as required during very hot weather. Activities involving vigorous activities will not take place when the temperature is 30° or higher

Ventilation/ classroom organisation:

Windows and other ventilation openings will be opened during the cool of early morning to allow stored heat to escape from the building. The use of electric lighting will be kept to a minimum during periods of very warm weather. All electrical equipment, including computers and monitors will be switched off when not in use and will not be left in standby mode. Classroom layouts will be adjusted if necessary to avoid direct sunlight on children. Staff will use blinds in classroom as required.

EMERGENCIES

Staff will follow Appendix A 'Looking after children and those in early years during heatwaves' (see below).

If staff are worried about a child in any way, they will seek a first aider in school straight away.

FURTHER INFORMATION

NHS Sunscreen and sun safety advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Live-well/seasonal-health/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/#sunscreen>

Cancer Research UK:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer>

Looking after Children and those in Early Years Settings during Heatwaves:

<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>

APPENDIX A

Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals (Department of Health and Social Care) Updated 13 May 2022

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. The school nurse, community health practitioner, family health visitor or the child's specialist health professional may be able to advise on the particular needs of the individual child. Support staff should be made aware of the risks and how to manage them. Further information about supporting children with medical condition can be found at the Department for Education website.

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.