

Dear Headteachers and Managers,

Thank you for your continued hard work and resilience as we plough towards the end of the year. As you may know, the Met Office has issued a level 3 alert warning for London about the heatwave in the week ahead. Please see link to [Advice for teachers and professionals](#). Children could be disproportionately affected by the heat and there is guidance provided below on how you can support all children and young people stay safe as well as your staff.

We are in contact with public health, and we await any additional formal guidance from central government if the risk reaches level 4. We will communicate this as soon as it is received which may be over the weekend, but I can confirm there is no updated guidance for level 4 as I write this email.

We are **not** advising schools to close during high temperatures as there is no maximum legal temperature threshold and this decision is a **Headteacher and Governor decision** which will be based on your individual risk assessments and circumstances. Importantly, school leaders should make sure they take any steps necessary to make sure children are safe and comfortable, which may include rescheduling sporting or mass events. The Department for Health and Social Care has issued some guidance below which we have summarised with some key links to full guidance documents embedded.

If you do have to close or adjust your school day in accordance to your school level risk assessments please can you send an unplanned closure form (see below) to the LA so we have a record of this. This includes part closures as well as full.

[Weather Condition Readiness & Unplanned School Closures | Lambeth Schools Partnership](#)

Guidance Summary

The Department for Health and Social Care has published [guidance for schools](#) and early years settings to help them, while the Health and Safety Executive provides general [guidance for employers](#) including education settings on how to manage high temperatures.

Here are the key points:

Children are more susceptible to high temperatures than adults

According to the [Department for Health and Social Care](#), 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 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 but teachers, assistants, school nurses and all child carers should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

How to protect children from the heat

The Department of Health and Social Care [recommends](#) children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C. Children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims and should stay in the shade as much as possible. Sunscreen should be used to protect skin and children should be provided with plenty of water.

In terms of how to manage heat indoors, they recommend that, where possible, windows should be opened as early as possible in the morning before children arrive, or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building (checking insurance conditions and need for security if windows are to be left open overnight). Windows should be closed when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep the heat out while allowing adequate ventilation. Indoor blinds or curtains can be closed where possible but should not block ventilation.

The use of electric lighting should be kept to a minimum and equipment should not be left in 'standby mode' as this generates heat. 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.

The health and safety executive provides [general advice](#) for employers on how to maintain a more comfortable working environment in high temperatures

By law there is no maximum temperature for a workplace, but the Health and Safety Executive is clear that the temperature in any workplace, including education settings, should be reasonable.

Here are the signs of heat related medical conditions in children

The signs of heat stress are:

Children may seem out of character and show signs of discomfort and irritability. These signs can include those listed below for heat exhaustion and will worsen if left untreated leading to heat exhaustion and/or heatstroke

The signs of heat exhaustion include:

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- hot, red, and dry skin
- confusion

Signs of heatstroke 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

For more information on heat related illnesses visit the [Department for Health and Social Care's website](#).

If a child is suffering from heat related illness these are the steps you should take

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.
4. As with any concern about a child's health, schools will have their own policies around contacting parents and guardians and these should be followed.

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