



Heatwave Procedure

1. Introduction and Purpose

This procedure outlines the proactive and reactive measures required to maintain a safe, comfortable, and dignified learning environment during periods of extreme hot weather at Sherwood Foundation School.

Students in our setting often experience heightened vulnerability to extreme heat due to medical conditions, sensory processing differences, medication side effects, or communication barriers. This procedure ensures full compliance with health and safety standards while meeting the specific physical and emotional care needs of our learning community.

The below provides guidance and transparency for the whole school community, however it is important to note that the final decision made by the Executive Headteacher will always have elements of discretion based on the rapidly changing circumstances during a spell of extreme weather and on contextual (and often sensitive) information available to them, in order to ensure the safety of the students and staff of the school.

2. Dynamic Risk Assessment and Monitoring

The Leadership Team will use the following points to guide and support their decision-making. The Leadership Team will monitor weather warnings using official sources such as the [Met Office](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk).

- **Trigger Levels:** The procedure is activated immediately upon the issuance of a Met Office Yellow, Amber, or Red heat-health alert. For guidance on these levels please visit: <https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/heat-health-alert-service>
- **Vulnerability Mapping:** Class teams must maintain an updated register of students with high-risk profiles (e.g., those with thermoregulation difficulties, specific epilepsy triggers, complex medical / mental health and wellbeing needs, or profound and multiple learning disabilities).

- **Individual Risk Assessments:** Individual risk assessments must be reviewed proactively to include specific heat-management strategies for highly vulnerable pupils.
- **Environmental risk assessment:** We will monitor the temperature at each campus throughout the day.
- **Advice from other agencies:** We will seek advice from agencies surrounding the child eg nursing, CAMHs and social care.

3. Standard hot weather action

a. Uniform and Sensory Clothing Adjustments

- **Sensory-Appropriate Attire:** Students are actively encouraged to wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing that aligns with their sensory preferences.
- **Footwear:** Supportive but breathable footwear is encouraged to maintain physical safety and mobility.
- **Modifications:** Adaptive clothing, splints, and orthotics must be monitored closely for increased friction, sweating, or skin breakdown.

b. Environmental Adaptations

Classrooms and communal spaces must be managed dynamically to minimise solar gain.

- **Ventilation and Blinds:** Blinds must be fully drawn in sun-facing rooms. Windows should be opened wide early in the morning and closed if the outdoor temperature exceeds indoor room temperature.
- **Room Relocation:** If a specific sensory room, classroom, or therapy space lacks adequate cooling, lessons must be relocated to shaded, ground-floor, or mechanically cooled areas.
- **Equipment Management:** Non-essential electrical equipment, large interactive screens, and sensory lights that generate ambient heat must be switched off when not in use.

c. Hydration and Medication Care

Maintaining fluid balance is critical, particularly for students who rely on assistive feeding or strict medication schedules.

- **Structured Hydration Breaks:** Water breaks must be explicitly built into the daily schedule. Fluid intake should be tracked for high-risk students.
- **Alternative Hydration:** For students with sensory aversion to plain water, staff will offer safe alternatives such as ice alternatives, flavored water, or

high-water-content foods, adhering strictly to speech and language therapy (SALT) guidelines.

- **Enteral Feeding:** Students receiving nutrition or hydration via PEG or GJ tubes will have their fluid flushes managed in strict accordance with their medical plans and community nursing guidance.
- **Medication Storage:** Temperature-sensitive medications must be monitored to ensure they are stored below 25°C, utilizing medical refrigerators where required by the manufacturer.

d. Modifications to Activities and the School Day

Vigorous physical strain and direct sun exposure must be eliminated or strictly modified.

- **Outdoor Play Restriction:** Outdoor play is prohibited during the peak UV and heat hours of 11am to 3pm
- **Hydrotherapy and Sensory Pools:** Water temperatures in hydrotherapy pools must be lowered or sessions suspended if ambient room temperatures pose a risk of overheating to students or staff.
- **Community Visits:** Off-site trips via school minibuses must be risk-assessed. Transport without active air conditioning should be avoided during peak heat hours.

4. When we might decide to reduce timetables or close the school.

It is the school's aim to remain open to all students if it is safe for them to attend however, due to the increased vulnerability of many of our students due to extreme heat, the school will use the following process as guidance to ensure as many students can attend as possible, prioritising their safety at all times.

Using the dynamic risk assessment (point 2 above), the Met office warnings and the environmental assessments conducted by The School, Executive Headteacher, in consultation with the Governing Body and Local Authority, will consider temporary early closures, a rotation of pupils, a transition to remote learning (where appropriate) or close the school if:

- If indoor temperatures reach a level that compromises safety despite all interventions. This may look different for each of the campuses and for different pupils within these campuses e.g. those who have difficulties regulating their temperature / underlying health conditions. We would also consider the risk of pupils who rely on the transport provided by the LA.
- If there is a risk of staff being unable to support pupils to keep cool enough e.g. through excessive exercise, non intake of fluids.

- If there is a risk that a pupil is expressing high levels of distress which may be presented through high levels of stress behaviour that causes themselves or others harm.
- If there is significant concern raised from health professionals including the school nursing service.

5. Partial closure and student attendance.

In all these circumstances the school would authorise these absences.

Factors we will consider if partially opening in relation to which students should attend:

- How much of the school can be brought to within a safe temperature.
- Confidential and sensitive information held by the school in relation to risk from non-attendance.
- Advice and guidance from social care and health colleagues.
- The student's individual risk assessment
- If the parent wishes the student to attend.
- If the student has a safe way of getting to and from school.
- Pupils of critical workers