



Extreme Weather Policy

(Incorporating Guidance from DofE & Public Health England)

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INTRODUCTION

At Sandfield Primary School we acknowledge the importance of protecting pupils during extreme weather conditions and want pupils to enjoy the outside space safely.

We will work with staff, pupils and parents to achieve this through the following:

AUDIENCE

This document is available to all members of the school community. A copy is in the school foyer.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to outline procedures that will provide consistent and safe practice for the safety of staff and pupils during extreme weather conditions. Much of this document will be good practice and is designed to ensure a consistent policy.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

- To create a consistent and safe environment for the children, staff and community of this school.
- To highlight possible areas of risk for staff and children.
- To outline key practice so staff will deal consistently with any concerns regarding extreme weather conditions.

PRACTICE

- The Senior Leadership Team will make any decisions regarding change of practice for any extreme weather conditions.
- The SLT will inform the Chair of Governors and the Guildford Education Partnership of any decisions made that may affect the normal school day.
- In all circumstances professional judgment must be exercised.

Snow or Poor Weather Closures

- In the event of any poor weather, the Senior Leadership Team will notify all parents and carers via studybugs, only if the school is to be closed during the school day.
- Any further information on a school closure that is decided overnight is posted on the school website.
- Parents are advised to also listen to Eagle Radio on the day for further information on closures due to bad weather and check the Surrey County Council website.
- Parents and carers are notified by Studybugs and the school website as soon as a decision is made if the school is closed the following day.

Closure before the end of the school day:

- Ensure that where possible, a minimum one hours' notice needs to be given to parents to enable time for them to make the appropriate arrangements.
- If in extreme circumstances this is not possible and children are waiting outside for longer than ten minutes, pupils remaining are taken to their classroom or the school hall to await collection where they will be supervised until the end of the normal school day.
- Communication to collect pupils early will be carried out **through studybugs**.
- Within the communication, the Senior Leadership Team will give a rationale for the decision made and steps made.

If the decision is made to keep the school open:

- Parents are informed of the importance of cold weather protection through information sent home in newsletters informing them of the extreme weather policy (hats, gloves, scarves, coats, appropriate footwear).
- A 'mufti' uniform will be worn on exceptionally cold days.
- Staff will ensure that the buildings are adequately heated.
- All pathways, the car park and playgrounds will be gritted.
- Any areas of concern due to slips and falls will be closed (i.e. trim trail, sports pitch).
- If there has been an unusual or excessive amount of rain/ snow/ hail/ strong winds, the SLT will make the decision to organise break and lunchtime play to take place in the classroom.

Extreme Heat and Sun Protection

- Parents are informed of the importance of sun protection through information sent home in newsletters and a letter informing them of the extreme weather policy (sunhats, sun cream, water bottles, shade).
- Pupils will talk about how to be SunSmart in assemblies at the start of the summer term and also in meeting with the JLT
- Parents and carers will be reminded about what they need to do about sun protection and how they can help at the beginning of the summer term.

Protection: this is an ongoing process

Shade:

- When the sun is strong staff will encourage students to sit/play in the shade where it is available.
- The large sun shade provides shade by the new Technology Classroom.
- Gazebos are erected in the playground where necessary.
- Extra water can be provided alongside the water fountains and pupils own water bottles.

Timetabling:

- In the summer months staff will aim to schedule outside activities, school trips and PE lessons in the shade if appropriate. If this is unavoidable staff will ensure hats and appropriate clothing are worn to prevent sunburn.

Clothing:

- When outside in sunny weather, children are required to wear hats. Hats that cover the ears and neck are available (see Uniform Policy).

Sunscreen:

- Sunscreen use will be encouraged on days when the sun is strong during summer. Parents will be reminded to apply sunscreen before pupils leave home.
- Sandfield cannot currently supply sunscreen to all pupils on a daily basis because of cost and possible allergic reaction (the SunSmartcouncil will review this annually).

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers by Cancer Research UK

Why is sun protection important for children and young people?

The number of cases of malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer is rising at an alarming rate. The good news is that the majority of these cases could be prevented. Most skin cancers are caused by too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. If we protect ourselves from overexposure to the sun then we can reduce our risk. This is particularly important for children and young people whose skin is more delicate and easily damaged. There are simple steps you can take to enjoy the sun safely – cover up with clothing and a hat, spend time in the shade and apply at least SPF15 sunscreen generously and regularly.

What about vitamin D?

We all need some sun to make enough vitamin D. Enjoying the sun safely, while taking care not to burn should help most people get a good balance without raising the risk of skin cancer. For more information on vitamin D, visit the SunSmart website: www.sunsmart.org.uk.

Why have a sun protection policy?

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils are protected from overexposure to UV rays from the sun, and the 2011 NICE guidelines for skin cancer prevention (2011) recommend that schools “develop, implement and monitor a specially tailored policy to ensure people are protected as much as possible”. This is particularly important when engaging in school based activities such as sports days, outdoor PE lessons, outdoor excursions and water sports, where the potential for sunburn is higher. Although fair-skinned people have a higher risk of sun damage, sun protection is relevant to everyone. Developing a policy is also an important step towards encouraging good health in line with national healthy schools programmes.

Further information about skin cancer and sun protection in schools, can be found on the Cancer Research UK SunSmart website at: www.sunsmart.org.uk

DofE Guidance for Extreme Hot Weather Conditions on Trips

Before the Expedition

The advice is firstly to adjust your risk assessments to include hot weather mitigations, which of course we would fully support. Mitigations could include:

- Ensure the **participants** are fully prepared;
- Plenty of water (topped up as required by supervisors)
- Wide brimmed hat
- Shirts with collars
- Electrolyte solutions such as Dioralyte
- Sun cream
- Properly trained in recognising and treating the symptoms of heat exhaustion.

Leaders

Provide everyone with information reminding them of the symptoms of heat exhaustion; additional sun cream supplies may be purchased to equip leaders; additional water bottles/jerry cans might be needed to ensure leaders are equipped with a good supply of water.

During the Expedition

- More frequent checkpoint meetings to monitor welfare with water refills always available;
- Encourage teams to start early in the day perhaps and take their time en route having more frequent and longer rests in shaded areas;
- Make route adjustments to reduce mileage/ascent/ long open un-shaded sections etc - leaders should be flexible with timings, route and distance in extreme heat;
- Ensure use of sunscreen, hats and PLENTY of fluid intake;
- Reminded teams about the signs and symptoms of heat stress;
- Encourage expedition team members to monitor each other and if in any doubt about ability to carry on, stop and take remedial action;
- Make sure there is adequate salt intake along with the water. (A few crisps, nuts or banana chips along the way for example) as drinking large volumes of water to replenish fluids without also replacing lost electrolytes (especially sodium and potassium) can lead to problems too;
- Use Puritabs to replenish water supplies in wild country. Where possible check points should be at or close to roads so that staff can ferry fluids to people (and take them off if necessary).

Also ensure all staff understand the signs and symptoms and the absolute **need to stop or evacuate if there are signs of heat exhaustion or heatstroke**. Whatever you decide, please do so in consultation with your teams, co-supervisors and assessors, and in addition, please look after your adult helpers.

Information from NHS Direct website:

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke are two heat-related health conditions. If they're not quickly treated, they can both be very serious.

Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can occur when the temperature inside the body (the core temperature) rises to anything between the normal 37°C (98.6°F) up to 40°C (104°F).

At this temperature, the levels of water and salt in the body begin to fall, which can cause a person to feel sick, feel faint and sweat heavily. Read more about the symptoms of heat exhaustion.

If a person with heat exhaustion is taken quickly to a cool place, is given water to drink and has their excess clothing removed, they should begin to feel better within half an hour and have no long-term complications.

Without treatment, they could develop heatstroke.

Certain groups are more at risk of developing heatstroke or suffering complications from dehydration, and should be taken to hospital. This includes:

- people with kidney, heart or circulation problems
- people with diabetes who use insulin

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is far more serious than heat exhaustion. It occurs when the body can no longer cool itself and starts to overheat.

When the core temperature rises above 40°C (104°F) the cells inside the body begin to break down and important parts of the body stop working.

If left untreated, it can lead to complications, such as organ failure and brain damage. Some people die from heatstroke.

The symptoms of heatstroke can include:

- mental confusion
- rapid shallow breathing (hyperventilation)
- loss of consciousness

What to do

Heatstroke is a medical emergency and should be treated immediately. Dial 999 to request an ambulance if you suspect heatstroke.

While you're waiting for an ambulance to arrive, make sure that the person is as cool as possible. Move them to a cool area as quickly as possible, remove excess clothing and try to cool them by fanning them. If they're conscious, give them cool, not cold, water to drink.

Who's at risk?

Heatstroke can affect anyone, but some people are more at risk than others and should take extra precautions during warm weather, especially during a heatwave. These include:

- people with conditions that affect the body's ability to cool down, such as diabetes
- those who have drunk too much alcohol (which dehydrates the body)
- people on certain drugs and medications, such as antipsychotics and betablockers

Avoiding heat exhaustion and heatstroke

There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke during a heatwave:

- Stay out of the sun during the hottest parts of the day, particularly between 11am and 3pm.
- If you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat.
- Don't leave anyone in a parked car.
- Avoid extreme physical exertion.
- Have plenty of cold drinks, but avoid drinks that contain caffeine and alcohol.
- Eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with high water content.
- Take a cool shower, bath or body wash.
- Sprinkle water over your skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck.
- Keep your environment cool.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke Heat exhaustion

The symptoms of heat exhaustion can develop rapidly. They include:

- very hot skin that feels 'flushed'
- heavy sweating
- dizziness
- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- feeling sick (nausea)
- being sick (vomiting)
- a rapid heartbeat
- mental confusion
- urinating less often and much darker urine than usual

A person with heat exhaustion should be moved quickly to somewhere cool and given fluids (preferably water) to drink. They should then begin to feel better within half an hour.

However, certain groups are more at risk of developing heatstroke or suffering complications from dehydration, and should be taken to hospital. This includes:

- children under two years old
- very elderly people
- people with kidney, heart or circulation problems
- people with diabetes who use insulin

Dehydration - drink plenty of fluids. This can be water, semi-skimmed milk and diluted squash or fruit juice, but it's best to avoid fizzy drinks or caffeine if possible. If you're finding it hard to keep water down because you're vomiting or have diarrhoea, try drinking small amounts more frequently (perhaps using a teaspoon or syringe for an infant or child).

If you or your child are dehydrated due to watery diarrhoea or excessive vomiting (hypernatraemic dehydration), try not to drink only water as it's likely to further dilute the minerals in the body and make the problem worse. Try drinking diluted juice, squash or a rehydration solution (available from pharmacies).

Heatstroke

The symptoms of heatstroke can develop over several days in vulnerable people, such as the elderly and those with long-term health problems, particularly in warm weather.

The symptoms of heatstroke develop more quickly when associated with physical activity. This type of heatstroke is referred to as exertional heatstroke. It usually affects young, active people.

Symptoms of heatstroke include:

- high body temperature – a temperature of 40°C (104°F) or above is often a major sign of heatstroke, although it can be diagnosed at lower temperatures and some people can reach these temperatures during physical exercise without developing heat exhaustion or heatstroke
- heavy sweating that suddenly stops – if the body is unable to produce any more sweat, it's a major warning sign that it has become over-heated and dehydrated
- a rapid heartbeat
- rapid breathing (hyperventilation)
- muscle cramps

The extreme heat that causes heatstroke also affects the nervous system, which can cause other symptoms such as:

- mental confusion
- lack of co-ordination
- fits (seizures)
- restlessness or anxiety
- problems understanding or speaking to others
- seeing or hearing things that aren't real (hallucinations)
- loss of consciousness

Heatstroke is a medical emergency. Dial 999 immediately to request an ambulance if you think that you or someone you know has heatstroke.

While waiting for the ambulance to arrive, move the person somewhere cool and give them fluids to drink (preferably water). You could also cool their skin with water by placing a damp flannel or sheet on them or spraying them gently. **NB** It's better to wait for medical supervision before immersing someone fully in water because it could increase their blood pressure significantly (hypertensive response), which could be dangerous for those with cardiovascular disease or those at risk of stroke, such as the elderly.

Treating heat exhaustion and heatstroke:

Heat exhaustion

If you suspect that someone has heat exhaustion, follow the advice outlined below.

- Get them to rest in a cool place – ideally a room with air conditioning or, if this isn't possible, somewhere in the shade.
- Get them to drink fluids – this should be water or a rehydration drink, such as a sports drink; they should stop taking fluid on board once their symptoms have greatly decreased (usually within two to three hours).
- Avoid alcohol or caffeine as these can increase levels of dehydration.
- Cool their skin with cold water – if available, use a cool shower or bath to cool them down, otherwise apply a cool, wet flannel or facecloth to their skin.
- Loosen clothing and ensure that the person gets plenty of ventilation.

Dial 999 to request an ambulance if the person doesn't respond to the above treatment within 30 minutes.

If the person is more at risk of developing heatstroke or suffering complications from dehydration then they should be taken to hospital either way. This group includes:

- children under two years old
- very elderly people
- people with kidney, heart or circulation problems
- people with diabetes who use insulin

Heatstroke

First aid

- Always call an ambulance in cases of suspected heatstroke. While you're waiting for the ambulance to arrive you should do the following:
- Move the person to a cool area as quickly as possible.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or using a fan.
- If they're conscious, give them water to drink but don't give them medication, such as aspirin or paracetamol.
- Shower their skin with cool, but not cold, water (15-18°C). Alternatively, cover their body with cool, damp towels or sheets, or immerse them in cool but not cold water.
- It's better to wait for medical supervision before fully immersing them in water, such as in a bath, as the body's response could cause them harm.
- Gently massage their skin to encourage circulation.
- If they start to have a seizure (fit), move nearby objects out of the way to prevent injury (don't use force or put anything in their mouth).
- If the person is unconscious and vomiting, move them into the recovery position by turning them on their side and making sure that their airways are clear.
- spraying their body with a mist of cool water while warm air is fanned over the body; the combination of cool water and warm air encourages rapid heat loss through evaporation