



Our motto is: 'Let your light shine... as you grow', (inspired by Matthew 5: 15-16)

Our vision is: 'We nurture our pupils to be the best they can be in every way - in an inclusive and supportive environment, rooted in Christian teachings.'

St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School

Heatwave and Hot Weather Policy

Policy owner: SLT & Governors

Date adopted: October 2026

Review date: October 2027

1. Purpose

At St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School, the safety, health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff are paramount. This policy sets out the arrangements we will follow during periods of hot weather, extreme heat and heatwaves to reduce the risk of heat-related illness and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment.

We recognise that high temperatures can affect children's physical health, concentration, behaviour and ability to learn. Some children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of heat, including younger pupils, children with certain medical conditions, those taking particular medication and pupils who may have difficulty recognising or communicating when they are becoming unwell.

Our aim is to keep the school operating safely wherever possible, making appropriate adjustments to activities, the learning environment and daily routines. Where risks cannot be managed adequately, we will consider whether changes to the school day or temporary closure are necessary.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Health and Safety Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, First Aid arrangements and Severe Weather and School Closure Protocol.

2. Monitoring weather conditions and assessing risk

The Headteacher, or a designated senior leader, will monitor forecasts and relevant public health advice during periods of hot weather.

The school will take account of:

- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Met Office Weather-Health Alerts.
- Forecast temperatures, humidity, overnight temperatures and the expected duration of hot weather.
- Temperatures and conditions in classrooms, corridors, halls, offices and other occupied areas.
- The availability of shade, drinking water, ventilation and cooler indoor spaces.
- The needs of individual pupils and staff who may be more vulnerable to heat.
- The safety of outdoor activities, physical education, sports events, trips and other planned activities.
- The availability of sufficient staff to supervise pupils safely.

Weather-Health Alerts will inform the school's response, but decisions will not be based on an alert level alone. Conditions within the school buildings and grounds, the needs of the school community and the effectiveness of available control measures will also be considered.

There is no single statutory maximum indoor temperature at which all schools must close. Decisions will therefore be based on a proportionate assessment of risk and whether suitable conditions can be maintained.

3. Keeping the school environment cool

The school will take reasonable and practicable steps to reduce heat and maintain suitable conditions for learning.

3.1 Classrooms and indoor spaces

Where appropriate, staff will:

- Open windows and ventilate rooms early in the morning when the outside air is cooler.
- Close windows and doors, where safe and appropriate, when the outside air becomes hotter than the air indoors, while maintaining adequate ventilation and air quality.
- Close blinds or curtains on sun-facing windows to reduce direct sunlight and heat gain.
- Move pupils away from direct sunlight and particularly hot areas of classrooms.
- Use cooler rooms or alternative teaching spaces where available.
- Switch off lights and electrical equipment when not required, particularly equipment that generates heat.
- Monitor room conditions and report areas that become excessively hot to the school office or senior leadership team.
- Consider changes to room use, lesson arrangements and timetables to reduce exposure to heat.

Fans may be used to improve air movement where appropriate and safe. In accordance with UKHSA guidance, fans should not be relied upon when temperatures reach or exceed 35°C, as they may become counterproductive. At such temperatures, alternative cooling measures and a review of the safety of the environment will be required.

3.2 Outdoor areas

The school will make reasonable arrangements to provide access to shaded areas and reduce prolonged exposure to direct sunlight.

These may include:

- Encouraging pupils to use shaded areas during outdoor play.
- Adjusting playground arrangements and restricting access to particularly hot surfaces or areas.
- Reducing the duration or intensity of outdoor activities.
- Ensuring that drinking water is available.
- Moving activities indoors where a suitable, cooler space is available.
- Cancelling or postponing activities where the risk cannot be managed safely.

Staff should remain alert to the temperature of playground surfaces and equipment, which may become hot enough to cause discomfort or burns.

4. Ventilation, Cooling and Classroom management

4.1 Air Conditioning and Classroom Cooling

St Mary's currently has air-conditioning installed in four classrooms: **Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6**. These systems provide an additional means of managing indoor temperatures during periods of hot weather.

Staff using these classrooms should operate the air-conditioning in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the school's arrangements for safe and appropriate use. Windows and doors should be managed appropriately to support effective cooling, taking account of the operation of the system and the need for suitable ventilation.

The availability of air-conditioning in these four classrooms does not remove the need to implement the other measures set out in this policy. Staff must continue to monitor pupils for signs of heat-related illness, ensure that drinking water is readily available, adapt physical activity where necessary and take appropriate action if classroom temperatures become uncomfortable or unsafe.

Classrooms without air-conditioning must also be managed carefully during hot weather, using the measures outlined in this policy to reduce heat build-up and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

5. Hydration and sun protection

5.1 Drinking water

Pupils will be encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day, even when they do not feel thirsty.

During hot weather:

- Pupils should have access to drinking water and be encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle.
- Staff should allow regular opportunities for pupils to drink.
- Pupils should be permitted to drink water during lessons where appropriate.
- Staff should monitor pupils for signs of dehydration or heat-related illness.
- Additional attention should be given to younger children and pupils who may need reminders or support to drink.

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that drinking water remains accessible during lessons, breaks, PE and other activities.

5.2 Sun protection

Parents and carers are encouraged to apply suitable sunscreen to their children before school and ensure that they have appropriate protection for outdoor activities.

During periods of hot weather, pupils should be encouraged to:

- Wear a suitable sunhat when outdoors.
- Stay in shaded areas whenever possible.
- Wear lightweight clothing that provides appropriate protection from the sun.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight during the hottest part of the day.
- Reapply sunscreen as directed by the product instructions.

The school will follow its usual arrangements for any sunscreen applied by staff, including appropriate parental consent and safeguarding considerations. Pupils should not share sunscreen products.

6. Uniform and clothing

During periods of extreme heat, the Headteacher may temporarily relax uniform expectations where this is appropriate and supports pupils' comfort and safety.

Parents and carers may be advised that children can wear suitable lightweight clothing, such as light-coloured garments, while maintaining appropriate coverage, dignity and school standards.

Pupils should continue to wear clothing and footwear that are safe for learning, movement and participation in school activities. Any temporary changes to uniform expectations will be communicated to families.

7. PE, sport and outdoor activities

Physical activity is important for pupils' health and wellbeing. However, vigorous exercise during very hot weather can increase the risk of overheating and heat-related illness.

The school will review PE lessons, sports events, playtimes, clubs, trips and other outdoor activities in light of the conditions.

Depending on the risk assessment, arrangements may include:

- Moving PE lessons indoors to a suitable space.

- Rescheduling activities for cooler parts of the day.
- Reducing the duration or intensity of exercise.
- Increasing rest breaks and access to drinking water.
- Providing additional shade and supervision.
- Cancelling or postponing activities where the risk cannot be managed adequately.

Vigorous physical activity will not take place on very hot days where it presents an unacceptable risk. Staff responsible for activities must remain alert to pupils' condition and stop an activity immediately if a pupil appears unwell.

Sports days, tournaments, fixtures and off-site activities will be reviewed individually. Parents and carers will be informed of any significant changes or cancellations.

8. Supporting vulnerable pupils

Some pupils may be at greater risk from hot weather because of their age, medical needs, disability, medication or difficulties communicating discomfort.

The school will consider individual needs and existing medical or care arrangements when planning for hot weather.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- Reviewing relevant healthcare plans and risk assessments.
- Identifying pupils who may need additional reminders to drink or take rest breaks.
- Ensuring that staff understand any relevant symptoms or individual warning signs.
- Providing access to cooler spaces and additional supervision.
- Liaising with parents and carers where individual arrangements need to be reviewed.
- Seeking advice from healthcare professionals where a pupil has complex medical needs and further guidance is required.

Staff must not change or withhold a pupil's prescribed medication because of hot weather without appropriate medical advice.

9. Staff responsibilities and wellbeing

The school recognises that staff may also experience discomfort or health risks during periods of high temperature.

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will consider the impact of heat on staff working conditions and take reasonable steps to reduce risks.

Staff should:

- Maintain adequate hydration and take appropriate breaks.
- Report excessively hot working conditions or concerns about the safety of a room.
- Follow agreed arrangements for ventilation, equipment and classroom management.
- Monitor pupils and report concerns promptly.
- Raise any health-related concerns that may require reasonable adjustments or an individual risk assessment.

The school will review staffing and supervision arrangements to ensure that any changes to activities, rooms or routines can be implemented safely.

10. Recognising and responding to heat-related illness

All staff should be alert to the signs of heat-related illness.

10.1 Signs of heat exhaustion

Symptoms may include:

- Tiredness, weakness or dizziness.
- Headache.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Excessive sweating.
- Muscle cramps.
- Pale, clammy skin.
- Rapid breathing or heartbeat.
- Intense thirst.

If heat exhaustion is suspected, staff should:

1. Stop the activity and move the pupil to a cool place.
2. Remove unnecessary outer clothing and help the pupil cool down.
3. Encourage the pupil to drink cool water if they are fully alert and able to swallow safely.
4. Use cool water, cool cloths or other appropriate cooling measures.
5. Inform the designated first aider and follow the school's first aid procedures.
6. Contact parents or carers as appropriate and monitor the pupil closely.

If symptoms worsen, the pupil does not improve promptly, or there is any uncertainty about their condition, urgent medical advice should be sought. Call 999 if a serious medical emergency is suspected.

10.2 Suspected heatstroke

Heatstroke is a medical emergency. Warning signs may include confusion, a seizure, loss of consciousness, very high body temperature, or hot skin that may be dry or sweaty.

If heatstroke is suspected:

1. **Call 999 immediately.**
2. Move the pupil to a cooler place if this can be done safely.
3. Begin rapid cooling using cool water, wet cloths or other appropriate cooling measures while awaiting emergency assistance.
4. Follow the emergency call handler's instructions.
5. Do not leave the pupil alone.
6. Inform the Headteacher or designated senior leader and contact the pupil's parent or carer as soon as practicable.

If a pupil loses consciousness or has a seizure, staff must follow the emergency operator's instructions and appropriate first aid procedures.

Staff should not delay calling 999 while attempting to contact parents or carers.

11. School opening, changes to the school day and closure

The school will aim to remain open during hot weather wherever risks can be managed safely. Hot weather alone will not automatically result in school closure.

The Headteacher, or an appropriate senior leader acting on their behalf, will decide whether the school can continue to operate safely, taking account of the conditions and the effectiveness of the measures available.

Where necessary, the school may:

- Amend the timetable or reduce the duration of particular activities.
- Move lessons to cooler areas.
- Cancel or modify PE, sports events, trips or outdoor activities.
- Adjust break and lunchtime arrangements.
- Temporarily relax uniform expectations.
- Introduce additional rest, hydration and cooling opportunities.
- Make other proportionate adjustments to protect pupils and staff.

If the school cannot maintain a safe environment despite reasonable measures, the Headteacher will consider an early closure or temporary closure.

Any decision to close will take account of pupil safeguarding, staffing, access to essential services, the condition of the school buildings and the arrangements required for safe collection.

Parents and carers will be informed through the school's established communication channels, including ParentMail (T2P) and the school website. Collection and supervision arrangements will follow the school's Severe Weather and School Closure Protocol.

Where a closure is necessary, the school will consider appropriate remote education arrangements in line with its contingency procedures and the circumstances of the closure.

12. Communication with parents and carers

The school will communicate relevant arrangements to parents and carers when significant hot weather is expected or when changes to normal routines are necessary.

Messages may include reminders about:

- Providing a refillable water bottle.
- Applying sunscreen before school.
- Bringing a suitable sunhat.
- Wearing appropriate clothing in accordance with any temporary uniform arrangements.
- Changes to PE, sports events, trips or outdoor activities.
- Any changes to the normal school day or collection arrangements.

Parents and carers should ensure that their contact details are up to date and inform the school of any relevant medical information that may affect their child's safety during hot weather.

We ask families to work in partnership with the school to help keep all pupils safe, comfortable and ready to learn.

13. Training, monitoring and review

The school will ensure that relevant staff are aware of this policy and understand the practical steps required to reduce heat-related risks.

The Headteacher and SLT will monitor the effectiveness of the school's arrangements during periods of hot weather and make changes where necessary.

Following any significant heat event, the school may review the effectiveness of its response and identify improvements for future planning.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to statutory requirements, public health guidance or the school's circumstances.

14. Relevant guidance and resources

This policy should be read alongside the following official guidance:

- [UKHSA: Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during hot weather](#)
- [UKHSA: Beat the heat – staying safe in hot weather](#)
- [Department for Education: Ventilation and air quality in education and childcare settings](#)
- [NHS: Heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)