



Morpeth First School

Sun Safety and Extreme Heat Policy

(Formerly Sun Protection Policy)

Date of Policy	Reason for change	Next review date
Spring 2025	Update to include extreme weather events	Spring 2026

Rationale

Whilst we recognise that some sun is good for us, over exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is an important safeguarding issue for schools. The sun's rays are particularly strong over the summer and without adequate protection, a child's delicate skin can easily burn, causing cumulative and irreparable damage and increase the chance of developing skin cancer in later life. Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to a person's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer, highlighting the importance of schools and parents working together to increase knowledge and influence behaviours, ensuring children are protected against UVR and learn how to enjoy the sun safely.

We are also mindful of the changing climate and the increasing incidence of days where the outside temperature is deemed as extreme. The UK Health Security Agency ([UKHSA](#)) guidance states that children can be more susceptible than adults to becoming ill more quickly due to the effects of hot weather. Being mindful of this, Morpeth First School will

make every attempt to ensure that children remain safe and comfortable when the weather is extremely hot.

This policy aims to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our pupils during periods of hot weather, including exposure to the sun and extreme heat. The school is committed to promoting safe practices and reducing the risks associated with heat-related illnesses.

Scope:

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, and visitors of the school during times of high temperatures or sunny weather.

Guiding Principles:

- **Prevention of Heat-Related Illness:** To prevent heat-related illnesses, such as heatstroke, dehydration, and sunburn.
- **Educational Awareness:** To educate pupils, staff, and parents about the dangers of sun exposure and extreme heat, and encourage safe practices.
- **Minimizing Exposure:** To minimize the amount of time pupils spend in direct sunlight during peak heat hours and provide opportunities for shade.

1. Sun Safety Guidelines:

- **Sunscreen:** Parents should ensure that pupils have applied sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 before coming to school. We ask that parents send in appropriate sunscreen in a named bottle so that pupils can independently reapply as necessary during the day. Staff will supervise children in applying their sunscreen before going outside. It is unfeasible for the school to provide sunscreen for all pupils, or for staff to apply sunscreen to individual pupils except in the case of very young children or those who are unable to apply it themselves. Further NHS information on the recommended use and types of sunscreen can be found [here](#).
- **Appropriate Clothing:** Uniform will be relaxed during periods of extreme heat. Pupils should wear loose, lightweight, and light-coloured clothing. Caps or wide-brimmed hats should be worn to protect the head, neck, and face from direct sunlight. Shoulders, upper arms and upper legs should be covered. Children should not wear strappy sandals for health and safety reasons.
- **Sunglasses:** Pupils are encouraged to wear UV-protective sunglasses to protect their eyes from harmful UV rays.
- **Hydration:** It is important that children have a water bottle in school each day in order to stay hydrated. There is a plentiful supply of fresh cool drinking water which children can access at all times. Staff will ensure that children have regular water breaks and pupils will be encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day.

Water bottles will be taken on trips, and as part of the risk assessment for summer trips, staff will ensure that water bottles can be refilled at the trip location.

2. Minimizing Exposure to Heat:

- **Playtime and Outdoor Activities:** When the temperature is excessively high, outdoor activities such as playtime or sports will be rescheduled to cooler times of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon.
- **Shade and Rest Areas:** Where possible, pupils will be provided with shaded areas during outdoor activities. If outdoor activities must take place, these should be shortened, and pupils should be allowed to rest frequently in shaded areas. If it is felt that there is insufficient shade for protection, breaks will be held inside.
- **Indoors:** During extreme heat, staff will endeavour to ensure an air flow within the classroom by opening windows and outer doors where appropriate.

3. Extreme Heat Precautions:

- **Heat Alerts:** The school has signed up for the UK Health Security Alert system's heat alerts. The school will monitor this and local weather reports for heat advisories or warnings. On days with extreme heat, the school will implement specific measures to reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses.
- **Physical Activity Modifications:** On extremely hot days, outdoor physical activities such as PE will be limited or moved indoors. Pupils will engage in low-impact, non-strenuous activities. Offsite trips will be risk assessed and cancelled if necessary.
- **Emergency Procedures:** In case of heat-related illness (e.g., heatstroke, heat exhaustion – see Appendix A), staff will follow the school's emergency response procedures, including cooling the pupil down, offering water, and contacting parents or emergency services if necessary.

4. Staff Responsibilities:

- **Supervision:** Staff will closely supervise pupils during outdoor activities to ensure they are following sun safety guidelines. They will ensure that pupils take frequent breaks in the shade and drink water regularly. They will remind pupils to reapply sunscreen before going outside for prolonged periods. They will continually risk assess and react to changes in the weather to ensure that pupils are not exposed to unnecessary risk due to heat
- **First Aid Training:** All staff members will receive basic first aid training, around identifying and recognising the signs of heat-related illnesses and how to respond appropriately. (See Appendix A)

- **Allergy awareness:** Hot weather and associated conditions (eg increase in pollen, increase in ozone) can be problematic for particular groups eg those suffering from asthma. Staff are to be mindful of this by watching for the signs and symptoms of an asthmatic reaction and ensuring that asthma medication is easily accessible at all times.
- **Curriculum:** Staff will use the Sunsafes education resources ([here](#)) and other similar resources to educate pupils in an age appropriate way about the dangers of sun and heat exposure.

5. Parental Responsibilities:

- **Prevention at Home:** Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with sunscreen applied, suitable clothing (e.g., hats, sunglasses), a water bottle and spare sunscreen. They should help children to learn how to apply sunscreen independently
- **Communication:** A letter or email will be sent out when high temperatures are expected, or if there is a significant change to a planned activity due to the weather. It is unlikely that the school will close due to extreme heat.
- **Reporting Illnesses:** Parents are asked to notify the school if their child has a medical condition that makes them more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.

6. Review and Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed, especially after a heatwave or extreme weather event, to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff will be considered when evaluating the success of sun safety and extreme heat measures.
- The Head Teacher and Governors will continue to develop strategies for responding to the impact of climate change and the increasing incidence of extreme weather events on pupil safety through the School's Climate Action Plan.

Conclusion: By implementing this policy, the school aims to foster a safe and healthy environment for all pupils during hot weather and extreme heat. The collective responsibility of the school, pupils, and parents is essential in preventing heat-related illness and ensuring the well-being of the children.

Appendix A

Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke ([See NHS UK](#))

Heat exhaustion does not usually need emergency medical help if you can cool down within 30 minutes. If it turns into heatstroke, it needs to be treated as an emergency.

Check for signs of heat exhaustion

The signs of heat exhaustion include:

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- feeling sick or being sick
- excessive sweating and skin becoming pale and clammy or getting a [heat rash](#), but a change in skin colour can be harder to see on brown and black skin
- cramps in the arms, legs and stomach
- fast breathing or heartbeat
- a high temperature
- being very thirsty
- weakness

The symptoms of heat exhaustion are often the same in adults and children, although children may become irritable too.

If someone is showing signs of heat exhaustion they need to be cooled down and given fluids.

Things you can do to cool someone down

If someone has heat exhaustion, follow these 4 steps:

1. Move them to a cool place.
2. Remove all unnecessary clothing like a jacket or socks.
3. Get them to drink a sports or rehydration drink, or cool water.
4. Cool their skin – spray or sponge them with cool water and fan them. Cold packs, wrapped in a cloth and put under the armpits or on the neck are good too.

Stay with them until they're better.

They should start to cool down and feel better within 30 minutes.