

Heatwave guidance for Barking and Dagenham schools, early years, and childcare settings 2016

Barking and Dagenham Local Authority will notify schools, early years and childcare settings when Heatwave alerts at Level 2 or above are received.

We encourage all schools and settings to follow the Public Health England Guidance.

In addition we recommend that advice be put on the school website for parents, including the need for them to provide appropriate clothing and to use sunblock to protect their children's skin.

It is recommended that for the youngest children, in particular, sunhats are available in schools and settings.

If school trips are planned risk assessments should include planning for exceptional heat. Preparations should include – spare sunhats available, shade identified, spare water available. When hiring coaches please ensure air conditioning is available, and that there is spare water available in case of traffic jams.

Schools also need to consider whether their outdoor play area has sufficient shade. If not, it may be wise to limit time in the play ground, particularly at lunchtime.

Guidance for those looking after schoolchildren and those in early years settings during heatwaves

Outdoors:

- on very hot days (i.e. where temperatures are in excess of 30°C) children should not take part in vigorous physical activity
- children playing outdoors should be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible
- loose, light-coloured clothing should be worn to help children keep cool and hats of a closed construction with wide brims should be worn to avoid sunburn
- thin clothing or suncream should be used to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes

- children must be provided with plenty of cool water and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot
 - *the temperature of water supplied from the cold tap is adequate for this purpose

Indoors:

- windows and other ventilation openings should be opened during the cool of early morning or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building – it is important to check insurance conditions and the need for security if windows are to be left open overnight
- windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep rooms cool whilst allowing adequate ventilation
- use outdoor sun awnings if available, or indoor blinds, but do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum during heatwaves
- all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers should be switched off when not in use and should not be left in 'standby mode' – electrical equipment, when left on, or in 'standby' mode generates heat

Which children are likely to be most affected by high temperatures?

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those who are overweight or who are taking medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects. Children under four years of age are also at increased risk.

Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to temperature extremes. The school nurse, community health practitioner, family health visitor or the child's specialist health professional may be able to advise on the particular needs of the individual child. Schools need to provide for children's individual needs. Support staff should be made aware of the risks and how to manage them.