



## HOT WEATHER POLICY

High temperatures both outdoors and indoors may harm children's health. Children cannot control their body temperature as efficiently as adults during hot weather because they do not sweat as much and so can be at risk of ill-health from heat. Heat-related illness can range from mild heat stress to potentially life-threatening heatstroke; the main risk from heat is dehydration.

### Heat stress

Children suffering from heat stress may seem out of character, or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including those listed below for heat exhaustion). These signs will worsen with physical activity and if left untreated can lead to heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

### Heat exhaustion

Symptoms of heat exhaustion vary but include one or more of the following:

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- hot, red and dry skin
- confusion

### Heatstroke

When the body is exposed to very high temperatures, the mechanism that controls body temperature may stop working. Heatstroke can develop if heat stress or heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms of heatstroke may include:

- high body temperature - a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F) is a major sign of heatstroke
- red, hot skin and sweating that then suddenly stops
- fast heartbeat
- fast shallow breathing
- confusion/lack of co-ordination

- fits
- loss of consciousness

### **Protecting children outdoors**

During periods of high temperature the following steps will be taken:

- children will not take part in vigorous physical activity or be taken outside during the hottest period of the day on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- children playing outdoors will be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible
- children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to nursery on hot days, to help keep cool and sunhats MUST be provided throughout the summer months
- Factor 50 sunscreen will be applied regularly, to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes. Sun cream is supplied by Little Steps Day Care, unless a specific brand is required. *If a parent does not give permission for sun cream to be applied, they will be expected to sign a waiver to say they accept the risks that this creates for their child.*
- children will be provided with plenty of water and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

### **Protecting children indoors**

During periods of high temperature the following steps will be taken:

- windows and doors will be opened as early as possible in the morning to allow stored heat to escape from the building
- windows will be pulled up when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air
- outdoor sun awnings will be put up, and indoor blinds/curtains will be closed
- electric lighting will be turned off when possible
- oscillating mechanical fans will be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C
- children will be encouraged to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water
- If the temperatures within the building rise above 35°C and cannot be reduced by any means, as electric fans are ineffective above this temperature and can make dehydration worse, we will consider closing the nursery early to ensure both children and staff are kept safe.

*(Public Health England - Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: guidance for teachers and professionals, 2015)*

### **Avoiding Dehydration**

Drinking water is available to the children throughout the day. The more able children are encouraged to help themselves to water and have jugs of water available both inside and out. They will be



reminded frequently to have a drink and practitioners will monitor each child's fluid intake. Babies will be offered water frequently during that day.

If a child is refusing to eat or drink, especially a young baby, we will monitor their fluid intake and closely monitor their nappies for signs of dehydration. **If a baby, who is refusing liquids, has dry nappies for longer than 5 hours and will not accept fluid or foods in any form, we will consider sending the child home to prevent the risk of severe dehydration that can lead to hospitalisation.**