

Purpose

The purpose of this Hot Weather Action Plan is to ensure children attending Brunswick Club activities are helped to stay safe, comfortable, and engaged during hot weather.

1. Staying cool and protected

During hot weather, the focus should be on keeping children safe and cool.

Shade

Ensure children have access to shaded areas during outdoor activities, whether it's natural shade from trees or designated shelters.

Hydration

Encourage children to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Have water readily available and remind them to sip frequently.

Sun protection

Encourage parents/carers to prepare their child appropriately before they arrive at the Brunswick: e.g. apply sunscreen to their child's exposed skin, dress their child in loose, light-coloured clothing, provide their child with a wide-brimmed hat, etc.

NB: If a parent/carer wishes their child to have sunscreen applied during the day, this must be notified to the worker in charge, and any sunscreen left must be clearly marked with the child's name.

2. Activity adjustments

Children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days.

Strenuous physical activity

Should be limited during the hottest parts of the day. If necessary, move activities indoors or provide opportunities for quieter, cooler games.

Indoor options

Have alternative indoor activities planned for hot days, such as arts and crafts, board games, or film time.

Water activities

If possible and appropriate, incorporate water-based activities like water play, sprinklers, or water balloon fights (with proper supervision).

Quiet time

Schedule regular breaks for quiet time and relaxation in a cool area.

3. Communication and awareness

Parents' / carers' involvement

Parents / carers should be kept informed about the hot weather plan and encouraged to provide appropriate clothing and sun protection for their children.

Children with complex health conditions

Where a child has complex health conditions or clinical vulnerability that could be adversely affected by heat, parents/carers should seek advice from their clinical team and ensure this information is included in the health section on their child's booking form and/or ensure this information is shared with the person in charge.

Staff awareness

All staff members must be made aware of this hot weather plan and should know how to recognize and respond to heat-related illnesses. (See Appendix 1.)

Monitoring

Children should be regularly monitored for signs of heat exhaustion or heatstroke, such as excessive sweating, dizziness, or nausea.

4. Food

Food Standards

All food provided should meet school food standards and be appropriate for hot weather (e.g., avoid heavy, greasy meals).

Mealtimes

Serving meals at cooler times of the day or providing options that are more refreshing in the heat should be considered.

Access to food

Children have access to food and water throughout the day, even if they are not participating in scheduled mealtimes.

5. Premises

Keeping the building cool

If it is safe and appropriate, open windows early in the morning to allow stored heat to escape from the building.

If possible, close windows during the day when it is hotter outside than inside whilst considering the need to maintain adequate ventilation and air quality.

Shade sun-facing windows if possible, and close indoor blinds or curtains to keep the heat out.

Switch off all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers when not in use – do not leave equipment in 'standby mode' as this generates heat.

If possible, use spaces for activities which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout to avoid direct sunlight on children

Use oscillating mechanical fans to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C (above this temperature they may be counterproductive).

Appendix 1

Health risks from heat

Children can be at risk from hot weather because of their physiology, behaviours and activity levels. Heat-related illness can range from mild heat stress to potentially life-threatening heatstroke. The most common risk from heat is dehydration (not having enough water in the body) and sunburn. If sensible precautions are taken, children are unlikely to be adversely affected by hot conditions. However, all staff should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

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
- excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin

To cool a child suffering from heat exhaustion:

- move the child to a cool area and encourage them to drink cool water
- cool the child as rapidly as possible, for example, by sponging or spraying the child with cool water and placing cold packs around the neck and armpits, or wrapping the child in a cool, wet sheet and assist cooling with a fan

If you are concerned about symptoms, or they are worsening, seek medical advice by contacting NHS 111.

Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke when the body is unable to cool itself down. Heatstroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal. Symptoms of heatstroke may include:

- confusion or lack of co-ordination
- seizures (fits)
- loss of consciousness
- high body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F)

- red, hot skin that can be sweaty or dry
- fast heartbeat
- fast shallow breathing
- diarrhoea

If heatstroke is suspected, call 999 and then cool the child down whilst awaiting medical assistance.

If a child loses consciousness, or has a fit:

- Place the child in the recovery position.
- Call 999 immediately and follow their instructions.