

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to update you regarding the forecast extreme weather conditions expected later this week.

As you may be aware, the Met Office has issued a Red Extreme Heat Warning for our area. This is an exceptionally rare warning and reflects a level of heat that presents a significant risk to health and wellbeing. Following careful consideration, looking at all alternative plans and consultation across NHLC, we have taken the decision that due to the severity of the forecast conditions, we will close on Wednesday and Thursday.

I fully appreciate that this decision may cause inconvenience and disruption for some families, and I would like to offer my sincere apologies for this. We have not taken this decision lightly. However, the safety and wellbeing of our children, staff and wider school community must be our paramount concern.

Unlike many modern workplaces, school buildings were not designed to accommodate temperatures of this severity. During a Red Heat Warning, as temperatures continue to rise throughout the afternoon, conditions within classrooms can become increasingly uncomfortable and potentially unsafe.

We are also mindful of our duty of care when our pupils are having to travel on taxis, with some pupils with journeys of up to an hour. Some of our taxis are not air conditioned and we are aware of the risks that this can pose to additional heat.

If your child has a medical condition or particular vulnerability that may be affected by the extreme heat, please contact the school directly so that they can discuss any additional support or arrangements that may be required.

Whilst children are at home, we would encourage all parents and carers to speak with their children about the dangers of swimming or playing in open water. During periods of very hot weather, rivers, lakes, quarries and reservoirs can be particularly tempting places for young people to visit. However, even on the hottest days, open water can remain extremely cold and dangerous, with hidden currents, sudden drops and other hazards that may not be visible from the surface.

It may also be helpful for families to be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion. Symptoms can include tiredness, dizziness, headache, feeling sick, excessive sweating, pale skin, muscle cramps, fast breathing and a raised temperature. If someone develops heat exhaustion, they should be moved to a cool place, encouraged to drink water or a sports drink, and cooled using water, cool packs or fanning. If symptoms do not improve quickly, or if someone becomes confused, unresponsive or seriously unwell, urgent medical advice should be sought. For more information see <https://www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid-for-babies-and-children/heat-exhaustion>

We recognise that schools play an important role in supporting working families and understand that this decision will not be straightforward for everyone. We are grateful for your understanding and support as we seek to balance educational provision with our responsibility to keep children and staff safe during these exceptional circumstances.

Should weather forecasts change significantly, we will of course keep families updated.
Thank you, as always, for your continued support.