

# Extreme Heat Risk Assessment and Rationale for Remaining Open

## Purpose

This document outlines the risks associated with closing the school during periods of extreme heat and sets out the rationale for remaining open with appropriate control measures in place.

Following assessment of both on-site and off-site risks, it is considered that the overall risk to pupils is lower when the school remains open and continues to provide supervision, welfare support, and a controlled environment throughout the school day.

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## Risk Assessment

### Hazard: Extreme Hot Weather

#### Potential Risks

- Heat exhaustion.
- Dehydration.
- Discomfort affecting concentration and wellbeing.
- Reduced air quality and ventilation in some classrooms.

#### Existing Controls

- All classrooms have suitable blinds and/or curtains to reduce direct sunlight.
- Windows and doors will be managed appropriately to improve ventilation.
- Access to drinking water throughout the school day.
- Parents and carers are requested to provide sunscreen for pupils.
- Regular reminders to pupils regarding hydration.
- Pupils to wear PE kit or alternative lighter uniform arrangements where appropriate.
- Pupils will be allowed to wear sun hats when outside.
- Reduced physical activity and adaptation of PE lessons where appropriate.
- Pupils will be discouraged from participating in high-energy activities such as football, running, and other strenuous games during periods of extreme heat.
- Increased welfare monitoring by staff.
- Use of shaded areas and cooler indoor spaces.
- Ventilation measures implemented where possible.

- Flexible use of accommodation to minimise exposure to the hottest areas of the building.
- Electrical equipment will be switched off when not required to minimise heat generation.

### **Additional Controls Available**

Following the departure of Year 11 pupils, additional classroom capacity is available. This allows:

- Relocation of classes from hotter classrooms to cooler areas of the school.
- More effective use of shaded and naturally ventilated spaces.
- Improved distribution of pupils across the site.

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## **Risks Associated with Early Closure**

Whilst extreme temperatures present challenges, closing the school part-way through the day introduces a number of significant risks that are largely outside the school's control.

### **1. Unsupervised Children During Peak Temperatures**

An early dismissal would require pupils to travel home during the hottest part of the day, increasing exposure to extreme temperatures.

#### **Potential Consequences**

- Heat exhaustion.
- Dehydration.
- Increased exposure to direct sunlight.
- Health concerns for vulnerable pupils.

School provides access to water, shade, supervision, and immediate support should a pupil become unwell.

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### **2. Safeguarding Concerns**

Many parents and carers may be unable to make alternative arrangements at short notice due to work commitments.

#### **Potential Consequences**

- Children left unsupervised.
- Increased safeguarding risks.
- Reduced access to trusted adults.
- Potential vulnerability for younger pupils and those already identified as requiring additional support.

By remaining open, the school continues to provide a supervised environment with established safeguarding procedures.

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### **3. River and Open Water Safety**

Periods of hot weather often lead young people to seek opportunities to cool down in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and other open water locations.

#### **Potential Consequences**

- Water safety incidents.
- Serious injury or drowning.
- Increased demand on emergency services.

The risk of pupils gathering at such locations is significantly reduced whilst they remain supervised within school.

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### **4. Community Safety and Public Behaviour**

Large numbers of pupils released during the middle of the day may congregate in public areas such as parks, town centres, retail areas, and transport hubs.

#### **Potential Consequences**

- Heat-related illness.
- Anti-social behaviour concerns.
- Increased community complaints.
- Reduced supervision and accountability.

Remaining open provides a structured environment that reduces these risks.

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### **5. Impact on Vulnerable Pupils**

Schools provide important support mechanisms for many pupils beyond education alone.

#### **Potential Consequences of Early Closure**

- Reduced oversight of vulnerable pupils.
- Loss of access to pastoral support.
- Increased risk for pupils with SEND, medical conditions, anxiety, or social care involvement.
- Reduced access to food and hydration for some pupils.

Remaining open ensures continued support and monitoring throughout the day.

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### **6. Equality and Family Impact**

An unexpected closure may disproportionately affect:

- Working families.

- Single-parent households.
- Families without suitable childcare arrangements.
- Households unable to provide a cool indoor environment.

Keeping the school open ensures equitable provision for all pupils regardless of family circumstances.

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## **7. Educational Impact**

Early closure results in a loss of curriculum time and disruption to learning.

### **Potential Consequences**

- Reduced teaching time.
- Interrupted intervention programmes.
- Disruption to planned learning activities.
- Negative impact on attendance and routine.

Learning can continue safely with appropriate adaptations and relocation of classes where necessary.

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## **Duty of Care Considerations**

The school has a duty to take reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

Whilst extreme heat presents identifiable risks, these risks can be effectively managed through:

- Access to drinking water.
- Welfare monitoring.
- Classroom relocation.
- Reduced physical activity.
- Ventilation and cooling measures.
- Staff supervision.

Many of the risks created by an early closure cannot be effectively controlled by the school once pupils leave the site.

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## **Conclusion**

Having considered both the risks associated with extreme temperatures and the wider safeguarding, welfare, educational, and community implications of early closure, it is assessed that the safest course of action is for the school to remain open.

The school is able to implement appropriate control measures to manage heat-related risks whilst continuing to provide:

- Supervision.
- Safeguarding oversight.
- Access to drinking water.
- Welfare support.
- A controlled and structured environment.

Early dismissal would transfer responsibility to families during the hottest part of the day and may expose pupils to increased risks associated with heat, lack of supervision, travel, and open water environments.

Therefore, the residual risk of remaining open, with appropriate mitigations in place, is considered lower than the residual risk associated with closing the school during the school day.