They will soar on wings like eagles…'
Isaiah 40:31

collaborate | enrich | trust | innovate | aspire | nurture

AQUILA
Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust

Heatwave Policy

Document Information	Date/source of Policy	Responsibility
Date of review	September 2025	SLT & Sustainability Lead
Date of new review	September 2026	SLT & Sustainability Lead

Our inclusive school is a place of creative learning where all talents are developed, celebrated and enjoyed. We nurture all to be curious, passionate and resilient lifelong learners. As a community, we listen to, forgive and love one another so all can be confident in who they are. Inspired by Jesus we walk beside each individual in our family by understanding and responding to their unique needs. We have hope in all our children that they grow to be open, compassionate people of the world who stand up for what is right.

Compassion Friendship Forgiveness Resilience Hope

Heatwave Policy

This policy sets out our school's approach to managing hot weather and heatwaves, so that informal practice becomes clear, consistent and communicated. It aims to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff during periods of high temperature. It is designed so that, in the absence of the Headteacher, any senior leader or delegated person may enact it. The policy also describes how measures will be communicated to staff, parents/carers and pupils.

The school recognises that hot weather and heatwaves pose a health risk (e.g., dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke) and can significantly affect comfort, concentration, behaviour and learning. The DfE guidance affirms that schools normally should *not* close but should implement a range of measures to keep pupils and staff safe and comfortable. The school will monitor weather and heat-health alerts so that measures can be triggered proactively.

The policy will be reviewed annually (or after any significant hot weather incident) and following any changes to national guidance or local site conditions.

Heat-wave mode activation: The school will enter enhanced protocol mode when one or more of the following occurs:

- A Met Office / UKHSA Heat-Health Alert (amber or red) is issued for the region; or
- The forecast indicates (and the Site Manager/Headteacher estimate) that indoor teaching spaces or outdoor areas will be subject to very high temperatures; or
- A decision is made by the Headteacher or Deputy (or designated senior leader) that the conditions present an increased heat-risk (for example sustained 30 °C+ indoors).
- On activation, the "Short-Term Measures" will apply immediately.

Short-Term Measures (to be used when heatwave mode is activated)

- Staff will receive a briefing outlining the current site status (temperatures), what measures are in place (ventilation, activity adjustments, shielding) and staff will continue to monitor the children, encouraging water breaks, supervising shade breaks if outside for learning.
- Pupils will be briefed on what is different (e.g., drink more often, wear hats, move into shade when outside, expect different timetable for PE/outdoor).
- Parent communication will be sent out if any changes are to be made to the school day or decisions made with regards to changes to uniform/sun cream/learning/school opening times.
- The pre-school lead will send a tailored message to pre-school families (younger children extra at risk) and ensure nursery staff adopt the same measures.

Site/environment & ventilation:

- Staff open windows and external doors early in the morning to allow stored heat to escape and site manager to monitor indoor temperatures.
- When outdoor air becomes warmer than indoor air, close external windows/doors to avoid heat gain, and close curtains/blinds to block direct sunshine where this will not impede ventilation.
- Minimise internal heat-generating equipment: turn off or standby off printers, ovens, unnecessary lighting, computers and other appliances not in use.
- Use mechanical fans or air-movement devices only if indoor temperature remains below 35°C as above that, fans may not help and may worsen dehydration.
- Relocate classes, where possible, from hottest rooms (south-facing) to cooler rooms or outdoors in shade if safer.
- Promote shade breaks for outdoor learning if appropriate and restrict time in direct sun.

Uniform/Dress Code/Sun Protection

- Children may wear the school PE kit or equivalent cool clothing if appropriate.
- Encourage sun hats with a wide brim when outside, and sunglasses (where appropriate).
- Request parents to apply high-factor sunscreen before arrival and remind children to reapply as needed.

Hydration/Breaks/Outdoor Activity

- Ensure easily accessible water for all children and staff; encourage regular water intake (more than usual) even if not thirsty.
- Ensure access to toilets so that children do not avoid drinking for fear of missing break.
- Modify timetable: reduce or postpone PE, outdoor sports or intensive physical exertion until cooler times of day.
- Adapt outdoor learning: schedule outdoor sessions in early morning or late afternoon when cooler; ensure shade, shorten length of time outdoors; cancel or relocate if shade insufficient.

Playtimes/Lunchtime

- Move children to shaded/play areas rather than full sun; reduce or stagger playground use.
- In catering/hall: provide cooler meal options; avoid hot-meal kitchens generating high heat loads.

Vulnerable Pupils/Staff

- Identify children and staff who may be more vulnerable: under 4s (pre-school), children with health conditions/medication, staff who are pregnant, etc. Provide additional monitoring, ensure they are not in direct sun or hottest rooms.

Communication

- Brief staff each morning about current conditions, expected weather and which measures are in place.
- Communication to parents what heatwave measures are in place for the day

Medium-Term Measures

When hot weather persists (e.g., several consecutive days of high temperature) or when the school expects episodes of heat:

- Review and potentially adapt the timetable to start earlier, finish earlier or include a “quiet indoor period” during peak heat hours (e.g., 11:00-15:00).
- Review and possibly postpone non-essential outdoor events/trips during very hot periods.
- Increase use of shaded/outdoor covered areas for break/lunch.
- Monitor classroom temperatures and CO_2/ventilation (if sensors in place) and adjust use of rooms accordingly.
- Offer guidance to staff on working in heat: ensure breaks, water, cooler working areas.
- Communicate regularly with staff/parents about ongoing hot conditions and reiterate measures (uniform, hats, water, shade).
- Consider whether staffing arrangements need adjustment (for example, if some staff are absent due to heat or if some rooms are too hot to use).
- Review vulnerable pupil lists and ensure their individual risk assessments are up to date (especially relevant for pre-school children).

Long-Term Measures

To be developed as part of site planning and maintenance, recognising climate change and increasing frequency of hot weather.

- Risk-assess the site/building for overheating (including classrooms, roof spaces, windows, external shading, orientation, insulation, ventilation).
- Increase shaded external areas (trees, shelters, awnings) in playgrounds and outdoor learning zones.
- Improve building thermal performance: high-performance glazing, blinds/curtains, roof insulation, reflectance, ventilated roof spaces.
- Install and maintain mechanical cooling/ventilation equipment if appropriate.
- Ensure future refurbishments consider thermal comfort in hot weather (and energy efficiency).
- Staff training on hot-weather risks (recognition of heat-related illness: heat exhaustion, heatstroke) and emergency procedures.

Specific Areas for Pre-School & Early Years

- Younger children (under 4) are more vulnerable to heat-related illness; additional vigilance is required.
- Ensure the pre-school room(s) are among the cooler rooms; consider relocation if necessary.
- Outdoor free-flow/play sessions should be adjusted: limit time in direct sun, ensure shade, supervise water intake more closely, ensure hats/suncream.
- Parent/carer communication for pre-school may emphasise arriving with sunscreen applied, hat, labelled water bottle, suitable summer clothes.
- Staffing ratios and breaks: ensure staff take breaks as needed in cooler spaces, monitor children for signs of heat stress.

Monitoring, Review and Oversight

- The Headteacher (or delegated senior leader) will review site temperature data (where collected) and feedback from staff/pupils following any hot weather event.
- After any heatwave period, the Senior Leadership Team will review how the protocol worked: what measures were effective, what issues arose (e.g., overheating rooms, shade shortage, uniforms, hydration, staffing), and update the policy accordingly.
- The policy will be formally reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant incident or change in national/regional guidance.
- The Governing Body (or appropriate committee) will receive a summary of how heatwave risks are being managed and assurance that measures are in place.