

Extreme Temperatures & Heatwave Policy

Dolce Casa Montessori — Small Nature Nursery 0-3

Policy owner	Date adopted	Review due	Version
Manager / DSL	21/06/2026	21/06/2027	1.0

1. Policy Statement & Aim

Dolce Casa Montessori is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of all children, staff and visitors during periods of extreme temperature. Children; particularly those aged under 4, and those with health conditions or taking certain medications, are especially vulnerable to the effects of heat. This policy sets out how we plan for and respond to hot weather and heatwaves so that children remain safe, hydrated, protected from the sun and able to enjoy the outdoors, while also managing the risks of extreme cold. It reflects our duty under the EYFS to promote the good health of every child and to take all reasonable steps to keep children safe.

2. Legal & Guidance Framework

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (group & school-based providers), effective 1 September 2025 — including the duty to promote good health (3.58), to ensure fresh drinking water is available (3.62) and to manage premises safety and risk assessment (3.79–3.80, 3.91).
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA): "Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during hot weather" (Dec 2024).
- UKHSA / Met Office Weather-Health Alert system and the Adverse Weather and Health Plan.
- Skcin "Sun Safe Nurseries" accreditation programme and the five S's of sun safety.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (duty to risk-assess).

3. Definitions

Heat-Health Alerts (HHA)

The UKHSA/Met Office issue colour-coded alerts — yellow, amber and red — indicating the level of risk to health from hot weather. Our response escalates with the alert level (see Section 5).

UV Index

A measure of the strength of ultraviolet radiation. When the UV index reaches 3 or above, sun-protection measures are required. Staff check the daily UV forecast (Met Office / Sun Safe Nurseries) in warmer months.

Heat-related illness

Ranges from mild heat stress, through heat exhaustion, to heatstroke — a medical emergency that can be fatal. The most common risks are dehydration and sunburn. Signs and the required response are set out in Section 11 and the quick-reference table in Appendix A.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

The Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Sign the setting up to receive Weather-Health Alerts and monitor forecasts and the daily UV index.
- Decide on and communicate adjustments to the routine (e.g. timings, outdoor activity, uniform) as the alert level rises.
- Ensure a hot-weather risk assessment is in place, reviewed and shared with staff.
- Ensure adequate shade, drinking water, sunscreen and first-aid provision are available.
- Make any decision to alter sessions or, in extreme cases, close the setting, informing parents promptly.

All staff will:

- Follow this policy, model sun-safe behaviour and remain alert to the signs of heat illness.
- Ensure children are hydrated, appropriately dressed, protected with hats and sunscreen, and kept in shade where possible.
- Pay particular attention to babies, under-2s and any child with a known vulnerability.

Parents and carers will be asked to:

- Provide a named, wide-brimmed sun hat and suitable lightweight clothing in warm weather.
- Apply sunscreen before arrival and give written consent for staff to reapply during the day.
- Share any relevant medical information, and ensure children come dressed warmly in cold weather.

5. Monitoring the Weather & Alert-Level Response

Alert level	Our response
Yellow HHA / warm days (UV 3+)	Standard sun-safety measures: hats, sunscreen, shade, extra water; check the daily UV forecast; limit time in direct sun 11am–3pm.
Amber HHA	Relax uniform; move active/physical play to early morning or shaded areas; increase shade and water breaks; avoid vigorous activity; keep the building cool (Section 10); monitor vulnerable children closely.
Red HHA	Keep children indoors in the coolest available rooms during the hottest part of the day; only brief, shaded outdoor time; consider shortening or altering sessions; heighten monitoring for heat illness; communicate plans to parents.

6. Protecting Children Outdoors

- Plan outdoor play for cooler parts of the day (before 11am and after 3pm) and keep children in the shade as much as possible.
- Children do not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days.
- Uniform/clothing rules are relaxed; children wear loose, light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed sun hat.
- Provide and create shade in the garden (canopy, sails, trees, gazebos) and rotate children out of direct sun.

- Offer water frequently and encourage children to drink more than usual; fresh drinking water is always available.
- Never leave a child in a parked vehicle, and ensure prams/buggies are not covered in a way that traps heat.

7. Sun Safety – The Five S's

In line with the Sun Safe Nurseries (Skcin) programme, we follow the five S's of sun safety whenever the UV index is 3 or above:

- **SLIP** on sun-protective clothing that covers the shoulders, back and tummy.
- **SLOP** on broad-spectrum sunscreen – at least SPF 30 with a UVA rating of 4 or 5 stars – applied generously.
- **SLAP** on a wide-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat to shade the face, ears and neck.
- **SLIDE** on UV-protective sunglasses where appropriate.
- **SHADE** seek shade, especially between 11am and 3pm when the sun is strongest.

8. Sunscreen Procedure

- Written parental consent is obtained for staff to apply sunscreen (see Appendix B).
- Parents are asked to apply sunscreen before the child arrives; staff reapply at least every 2 hours, and after water play or towelling.
- Sunscreen is at least SPF 30 with a UVA rating of 4–5 stars. Parents may provide their child's own labelled cream where there are skin sensitivities or allergies.
- Staff apply sunscreen with care for dignity and safeguarding, supporting older children to apply their own under supervision.
- Any known allergy or skin condition is recorded and a suitable alternative agreed with parents.

9. Hydration & Food

- Fresh drinking water is freely available indoors and outdoors at all times; children are offered drinks frequently and reminded to drink.
- Water bottles/beakers are accessible, named and refilled throughout the day; extra water breaks are built into hot days.
- Children are encouraged to eat normally; lighter meals and water-rich snacks (e.g. fruit) are offered in very hot weather.
- Staff watch for signs of dehydration – for children in nappies, dark urine or dry nappies may indicate the need for more fluids.

10. Protecting Children Indoors

- Open windows early in the morning (where safe) to let stored heat escape; use window restrictors so openings remain safe for children.
- Where it is hotter outside than in, close windows during the day while maintaining adequate ventilation and air quality.
- Shade sun-facing windows and close blinds/curtains to keep heat out.
- Switch off electrical equipment when not in use (no standby mode) as it generates heat.

- Use the coolest available rooms and arrange the layout so children are not in direct sunlight.
- Use oscillating fans to move air only when the temperature is below 35°C (above this they can be counterproductive); fans are sited safely out of children's reach.
- Consider adjusting start, finish and play times to avoid activity during the hottest conditions.

11. Recognising & Responding to Heat-Related Illness

All staff are trained to recognise heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Heat stress may show as a child being out of character, irritable or uncomfortable, worsening with activity. If untreated it can progress to heat exhaustion and then heatstroke.

Heat exhaustion – signs and action

Signs include tiredness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, and excessive sweating with pale, clammy skin. Staff will:

- Move the child to a cool area and encourage them to drink cool water.
- Cool the child as quickly as possible – sponge or spray with cool water, place cold packs around the neck and armpits, or wrap in a cool wet sheet and fan.
- Contact NHS 111 if concerned or if symptoms worsen, and inform parents.

Heatstroke – a medical emergency

Signs include confusion or loss of co-ordination, seizures, loss of consciousness, a temperature of 40°C (104°F) or above, hot red skin (sweaty or dry), a fast heartbeat, fast shallow breathing or diarrhoea. Staff will:

- Call 999 immediately and begin cooling the child while waiting for help.
- If the child loses consciousness or has a fit, place them in the recovery position, call 999 and follow their instructions.
- Inform parents and the manager/DSL without delay and record the incident.

12. Babies, Under-2s & Vulnerable Children

- Children under 4, and those with health conditions or on certain medications, are at greater risk and are monitored especially closely.
- Babies are kept out of direct sunlight at all times; prams/buggies are shaded with clip-on parasols, never covered with cloths that trap heat.
- Sleeping children are checked frequently; rooms are kept cool and well ventilated and bedding is light.
- Where a child has complex or clinical needs, advice is sought from their clinical team and shared with relevant staff via their care plan.
- Babies in nappies are offered extra fluids; dark urine or dry nappies are treated as a sign of dehydration.

13. Outings & Trips

- Trips are risk-assessed for heat; outings may be rescheduled or shortened during amber/red alerts.
- Staff take water, hats, sunscreen and a first-aid kit, plan shaded routes and rest stops, and maintain ratios and headcounts.

14. Vitamin D – A Balanced Approach

Some sun exposure helps children produce vitamin D, but over-exposure is a serious health risk. We strike a balance: children enjoy the outdoors safely using the five S's, and parents are signposted to NHS guidance on vitamin D and, where relevant, supplementation for under-5s.

15. Communication with Parents

- This policy is shared with parents and available on request; reminders are issued at the start of warmer months.
- Parents are informed of routine changes during heat alerts and of any incident involving their child.
- Sun-safety messages and resources (e.g. Sun Safe Nurseries materials) are shared to reinforce the message at home.

16. Extreme Cold Weather

Although heat presents the greater risk in our setting, this policy also covers extreme cold. During very cold or icy weather we will:

- Ensure children are dressed in warm layers, hats, gloves and suitable footwear, and limit time outdoors in severe cold.
- Keep the premises adequately heated and maintain hot water and heating systems.
- Risk-assess outdoor areas for ice, snow and slip hazards, gritting or closing access where needed.
- Maintain hydration and offer warm food/drinks; monitor children for signs of being too cold.
- Follow our adverse-weather/closure procedure if travel or premises conditions become unsafe, informing parents as early as possible.

17. Record Keeping & Review

- Hot-weather risk assessments, sunscreen consents, accident/incident records and any closure decisions are recorded and retained.
- This policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner if guidance changes, by the Manager/DSL.

Appendix A – Heat Illness: Quick-Reference for Staff

Condition	Signs to look for	Immediate action
Heat stress	Out of character, irritable, uncomfortable; worsens with activity; dark urine / dry nappies.	Move to a cool area, offer cool water, remove excess clothing, monitor closely.
Heat exhaustion	Tiredness, dizziness, headache, nausea/vomiting, heavy sweating, pale clammy skin.	Cool rapidly (cool water, cold packs to neck/armpits, fan), give cool water, call NHS 111 if worsening, tell parents.
Heatstroke (EMERGENCY)	Confusion, seizures, loss of consciousness, temp $\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C}$, hot red skin, fast/shallow breathing, diarrhoea.	Call 999 immediately, cool the child while waiting; if unconscious/fitting use recovery position; inform manager & parents.