

15th July 2022

Dear Head Teacher,

Re: Extreme Temperatures

We hope you are well. As you will be aware a national emergency has been declared since the UK Met Office issued its first ever red warning for extreme temperatures on Monday 18th July and Tuesday 19th July 2022. At the time of writing, this warning covers a large area of England from London through the Midlands to Manchester and York.

The Met Office red warning means:

- Population-wide adverse health effects, not limited to those most vulnerable to extreme heat, leading to serious illness or danger to life.
- Substantial changes in working practices and daily routines will be needed.
- A high risk of failure of heat-sensitive equipment, potentially leading to localised loss of power and other essential services.
- More people visiting coastal areas, lakes and rivers, leading to an increased risk of water safety incidents.
- Delays on roads and road closures, along with delays and cancellations to rail and air travel.

The Met Office has urged people to take the warning as seriously as a red or amber warning for snow or wind. The same is true for employers.

The NASUWT has existing guidance on excessive temperatures including relevant legislation which we attach for your reference.

In addition, as this extreme heat constitutes a serious hazard all schools in a warning zone must carry out a thorough risk assessment and take whatever reasonably practicable measures are indicated to control the risk. This could include partial closure, so that only rooms that are shaded (such as north facing) are used. It may be necessary to order a full closure. The risk assessment must also cover any outdoor activities, and risks associated with travelling to and from school.

The extreme heat will impact on some individuals more than others, such as the very young/old and those with certain health conditions or disabilities. Any staff falling into these categories should have an individual risk assessment and additional reasonable

adjustments may be needed, such as working from home. It must be remembered, however, that the dangers are not limited to those most vulnerable to extreme heat, leading to serious illness or danger to life in otherwise healthy individuals as well.

We would like to remind you that the employer has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that all schools are safe places for teaching and learning. The contents of this letter have been shared with Kirston Nelson, Director of Education and Skills at Coventry City Council.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Richings and Manjinder Bhandal
NASUWT Coventry