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Love - Courage - Respect

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Extreme Weather

Dear Families,

Following the most recent experience of hot weather, the Local Authority and representatives of schools on the Island met to explore a collective response to the extreme weather.

Wanting to work with our families, it was agreed it would be helpful to share the following information to help share a wider understanding of the guidance.

Understanding Weather Alerts used by Schools
To help keep children, staff and families safe during periods of severe weather, a number of national alert systems are used across the UK. These alerts provide information about potential risks and help organisations make informed decisions about any additional precautions that may be required. There are two main types of alert that schools may hear about: Met Office Weather Warnings and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Weather-Health Alerts. Although they are related, they serve different purposes and focus on different risks.

Met Office Weather Warning
A Met Office Weather Warning focuses on the weather itself and its wider impacts on people, property, transport and infrastructure. It covers hazards such as:

- Rain and flooding
- Wind and storms
- Snow and ice
- Thunderstorms
- Fog
- Extreme heat

Warnings are issued for the general public, businesses, emergency planners and transport operators across the UK. They are colour coded as Yellow, Amber or Red, depending on the severity of the expected impacts.
Schools may use Met Office Weather Warnings when assessing risks associated with travel, site safety, building conditions and the wider impact of severe weather on the school community.

UKHSA Weather-Health Alert
A UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Weather Health Alert focuses specifically on the health impacts of hot or cold weather. It is primarily aimed at:

- Health and social care services

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- Local authorities
- Emergency responders
- Care homes and voluntary organisations

These alerts help services prepare for increased health risks such as heat related illness, dehydration, hypothermia and increased pressure on NHS services. Weather Health Alerts are particularly relevant during periods of extreme heat, when children, older people and those with underlying health conditions may be at greater risk.

Which alert system does the Department for Education use?
When providing guidance to schools during periods of hot weather, the Department for Education (DfE) refers schools to the UKHSA Weather-Health Alert system, which is developed jointly by the UKHSA and the Met Office. The DfE advises schools and early years settings to use these alerts to help determine appropriate actions to protect pupils and staff during periods of hot weather.
For wider severe weather events such as storms, snow, flooding or high winds, schools will also monitor Met Office Weather Warnings as part of their local risk assessments and emergency planning arrangements.
In all cases, decisions about any changes to school operations remain based on local circumstances, risk assessments and the need to maintain a safe environment for pupils and staff.

Each school will make the decision as to whether they will remain open or close. This will not be directed by the Local Authority but will be a decision for the school's governing body and the Headteacher.

Where possible schools should remain open, even though the schools will be hot. Following guidance provided by the DfE this will be mitigated as best as the schools can.
On rare occasions it may not be possible for the school to open. If this is the case the school will inform parents of the arrangements that will be made for critical workers' children.
The schools will inform parents of the decision as soon as it is practical for them. It is worth noting that this can be dependent on a number of issues and require communications that may take time to resolve.

When a school is open the children are expected to attend as a normal school day and attendance will be treated as normal.

Please use the school's communication routes to stay apprised of the weather updates.

Kind regards

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Bembridge CE Primary

Jade Kennett
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