



17th July 2022

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

Wellfield Academy

Executive Headteacher Mrs L Gwinnett
Head of School Mr J Lewis

Extreme Weather Warning- School Closure Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th July 2022

As we write to you, we hope you are well and enjoying the warm weather.

With that in mind, you may be aware that the Met Office has issued its first ever Red warning for exceptional heat for the start of next week, which includes Leyland. This means we will experience an exceptionally hot spell over the two days which will impact on people and infrastructure meaning there should be substantial changes in working practices and daily routines. As a result, we have carefully thought through how to ensure that we maintain high standards of health and safety for all of our school community.

First of all, we have fully carefully considered the actions and changes in practice we would need to put in place if we were to keep the school open for the two days. These are outlined below and which also references points taken from the Guidance for those looking after school children and those in early years settings during heatwaves:

- Children should not be playing outside in extreme weather and would therefore need to be kept inside all day
- Vulnerable children and adults including those with any underlying health conditions such as epilepsy, asthma and pregnancy should not be in work/school
- Windows and other ventilation openings should be opened during the cool of early morning or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building
- Windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors
- Use outdoor sun awnings if available, or indoor blinds, but do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows
- Although there are no maximum temperatures there is a legal obligation to ensure reasonable temperatures are maintained for working conditions
- Some schools have had to close classrooms where conditions are too hot

Although we can implement many of the measures outlined above, we are extremely concerned that temperatures around the school and within classrooms in particular will not be conducive to productive learning and may compromise the health and safety of students and staff. We do not want anybody fainting or having epileptic seizures, which are more likely in extreme weather. As we do not have air conditioning in any room within school, temperatures within classrooms of high numbers of students are highly likely to be far in excess of those forecast for Monday and Tuesday (potentially in excess of 35 degrees). We also have a significant number of classrooms that get very warm in normal hot weather and, in these temperatures, they would be unbearable and, I believe, dangerous. Unfortunately, we are limited in where we can move these lessons to. Even for those students who are less severely affected, their concentration will be diminished and ability to learn could deteriorate. The chances of meaningful learning taking place in these kinds of temperatures is very low. In addition, students would have to stay inside at both break and lunch, something which also raises a concern about the health and safety of students.



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On a much simpler point, staffing is already reduced with those who have tested positive for Covid and, when we remove the requirement for vulnerable staff with underlying conditions to attend work, we simply do not have enough staff to safely open the school.

We did carefully consider whether we should open school for our more vulnerable students. However, this would mean bringing in some of our most vulnerable staff to work in unsafe conditions (kitchen, site, office staff, for example). In addition to this, it would mean our most vulnerable students travelling home during the hottest part of the day.

With all of this in mind, we have made the decision to close our school on both Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th July with students expected to return on Wednesday 19th July, 8.40am.

Whilst we appreciate that this may create some challenges to parents and there may well be some who do not agree with this decision, we believe moving to remote learning is a safer option.

Remote Learning

Students should be working from home, as Monday and Tuesday are both school days and they should not be out and about in the local community. Student learning will move online for both Monday and Tuesday. Considering the extremely high temperatures forecast, we are mindful that completing 5 hours of remote learning is not a reasonable expectation of students. Staff have been requested to set 30 minutes of activities or learning via Google Classroom for each lesson throughout the day meaning students should have the equivalent of roughly 2 ½ hours of remote learning to complete each day. If your child does need any support or advice, please email us (enquiries@wellfieldacademy.org) and we will ensure a member of staff makes contact to provide help required.

Staying Safe

Emphasis should be placed on the advice that we want all students to stay safe. This means that we strongly advise that students do not see this as an opportunity to go out with friends in the sun and certainly do not go swimming in any open water sites. In fact, the advice is to remain cool indoors and to remain hydrated.

Drowning incidents are especially high at this time of year and we continue to hear devastating stories locally about loss of life on a weekly basis when people, particularly youngsters, choose to swim in open water during the warm weather. Every year people drown both at home and on holiday because they don't take simple precautions, so reaching people with water safety messages is vital. Please refer your child to the Royal Life Saving Society advice below to help avoid any tragic accidents this year.

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/summer-water-safety>

We hope you appreciate and understand the decision we have made to ensure the health and safety of all of our school community. We look forward to welcoming all students and staff back to school on **Wednesday 20th July, 8.40am**, for the final two days of the school year. In the meantime, if we have any questions at all or feel your child would benefit from a phone call from a member of staff over the two days, please do not hesitate to contact us enquiries@wellfieldacademy.org.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Lewis
Head of School