

Hot Weather Policy

At Chewing with River, the wellbeing of the dogs we support is always our top priority. As temperatures rise, we take extra steps to ensure training remains safe, comfortable, and stress-free. This policy outlines how we adapt our services during warm weather (from 18°C upwards) in line with current veterinary guidance.

This policy applies to all training and behaviour sessions, and may be updated based on evolving best practice and expert advice.

Outdoor Sessions

18°C to 23°C:

- Sessions will proceed with caution and adjustments.
- Maximum outdoor time will be capped at 30 minutes.
- Activities will be low-intensity and focused on calm learning.
- Regular water breaks will be taken every 10 minutes.
- Dogs will remain in shaded areas, and hot surfaces will be avoided entirely.
- Dogs more vulnerable to heat, including brachycephalic breeds, seniors, puppies, or dogs with known health conditions, will have sessions moved indoors or rescheduled.

24°C to 26°C:

- All outdoor sessions will be automatically rescheduled or relocated indoors.
- Clients will be contacted at least the evening before, or with a minimum of 2 hours' notice.
- Alternative activities like scentwork, enrichment-based calm training, or remote sessions will be offered.

27°C and above:

- All outdoor sessions will be suspended without exception to safeguard dog welfare.

Indoor Sessions

Indoor sessions may continue with added safety measures:

- The training space must be well-ventilated.
- Cooling aids (fans, mats) should be provided where possible by the client.
- If indoor temperatures exceed 24°C, session length may be reduced.
- Dogs must have constant access to fresh drinking water.
- High-energy work (e.g. recall, high-arousal games) will be avoided.
- The room temperature will be monitored to ensure it remains safe.

If indoor temperatures exceed 26°C despite ventilation, sessions will be postponed or offered as remote consultations.

General Hot Weather Safety

- Dogs will be monitored continuously for signs of heat stress (panting, drooling, fatigue).
- Any signs of overheating will prompt immediate cooling measures and, if necessary, veterinary advice.
- When travelling to sessions, we encourage clients to use well-ventilated vehicles and avoid walking dogs long distances in the heat.
- Please inform us if your dog has any condition (e.g. heart or respiratory issues) that may be exacerbated by warm weather.

Client Responsibilities

To help us keep your dog safe, please:

- Ensure your dog is well hydrated before the session.
- Do not exercise your dog before the session.
- Bring a water bottle and bowl for outdoor sessions.
- Share any health concerns that might affect how your dog copes with heat.
- Avoid dressing dogs in coats, bandanas, or boots unnecessarily during hot weather.

This policy has been developed in line with advice from the British Veterinary Association (BVA), Dogs Trust, and RSPCA. Chewing with River reserves the right to reschedule or cancel sessions to protect dogs' health and safety.