

Heatwaves

Heatwave considerations for schools

- Disseminate the [HSE check list](#) for school staff to manage thermal comfort in the workplace.
- Manage premises and their use of fans to increase air flow, water coolers, and air conditioning units and that they are in working order where service issues are raised. Portable water coolers and air conditioning units can be ordered via hiring companies such as [HSS Hire](#)
- Monitor indoor temperatures.
- Identify a 'rest' area at each school and that all staff are familiar with this location and that it is clearly signed.
- Compile a list of potentially 'at risk' staff e.g. those with PEEPS plans and on-going medical conditions.
- Place the latest information on all staff notice boards, informing staff of health and safety issues relating to heatwaves.
- Ensure that windows can be safely opened.
- Curtail heat-generating activities such as use of computers, Bunsen burners, ovens, design and technology equipment, strenuous physical activity in PE lessons etc.
- Permit pupils to drink water in classrooms.
- Reallocate classes to cooler rooms whenever possible.
- Relax dress codes for staff and pupils.
- Install white blinds and/or reflective film on windows.
- Schedule more frequent breaks for staff and pupils.

UKHSA heatwave plan – guidance for schools

- On very hot days (that is, where temperatures are in excess of 30°C) children should not take part in vigorous physical activity such as sports days and P.E.
- Children playing outdoors should be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible.
- Loose, light-coloured clothing should be worn to help children keep cool and hats of a closed construction with wide brims should be worn to avoid sunburn.
- Thin clothing or sun cream should be used to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes.
- Children must be provided with plenty of cool water and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot.
- Windows and other ventilation openings should be opened during the cool of early morning 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 – this should help keep rooms cool whilst allowing adequate ventilation.
- Use outdoor sun awnings if available, or indoor blinds, but do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows.
- Keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum during heatwaves.
- All electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers should be switched off when not in use and should not be left in 'standby mode'.

Increased risk

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those who are overweight or who are taking medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects.

Children under 4 years of age are also at increased risk. Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to temperature extremes.

The school nurse, community health practitioner, family health visitor or the child's specialist health professional may be able to advise on the particular needs of the individual child.

Schools need to provide for children's individual needs. Support staff should be made aware of the risks and how to manage them.

Further information is available here: [Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves:Guidance for teachers and professionals](#)

Policy and risk assessment

Log in to view information:

- [Thermal comfort guidance for schools](#)
- [Building comfort sample risk assessment](#)
- [Working outdoors sample risk assessment](#)
- [Codes of practice \(COPs\) and risk assessment](#)

Health risks

High temperatures could give rise to health risks especially for the very young, older people and people with serious illnesses.

In a heatwave people may get dehydrated and their bodies may overheat. This can cause heat exhaustion which can cause many symptoms including; headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps, pale skin and a high temperature.

It is important if you start to feel unwell to seek medical advice as soon as possible or it could develop into heatstroke which can cause serious health problems.

- Check the weather forecast and any high temperature health warnings at www.metoffice.gov.uk
- Contact NHS Choices on 111 or [NHS Online](#) for advice about heat exhaustion and heatstroke.
- [NHS advice about preparing for hot weather](#) (NHS website)

Summer preparedness guidance

- [Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves](#) Guidance for teachers and professionals

- [Beat the heat: staying safe in hot weather](#) Guidance on staying safe in hot weather, including how to keep your home cool.
- [UKHSA heat health alert toolkit](#)

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- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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