

Health and Safety Briefing

Hot Weather Conditions – Guidance for Schools and Early Years Setting

This guidance will assist schools in reviewing health and safety arrangements for protecting staff, pupils and visitors during hot weather.

Excessive exposure to heat can cause dehydration and heat exhaustion. It can also lead to loss of concentration and tiredness contributing to poor learning and an increased risk of accidents.

The health and safety regulation requires employers to undertake risk assessment wherever there is a significant risk of harm to their employees and others e.g. prolonged exposure to heat such as the sun. Therefore, in carrying out a risk assessment, the employer should adopt the following steps below:

Five steps to risk assessment

1. Identify the hazards (anything that can cause harm)
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

Temperatures requirements are covered by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and provide information on a minimum temperature of **16 degrees Celsius** for sedentary work – **or 13 degrees Celsius** for physical activities during winter.

However, for the summer period, there is no legal upper temperature limit. It is therefore essential that the employer determines what is **reasonable comfort** in accordance to the needs of the staff and service users as the building fabric and layout will vary considerably.

There are many practical precautionary measures that can be introduced as part of a risk assessment to improve the working environment during spells of hot weather (see proforma checklist attached Appendix 1).

You should complete this checklist and if your answers to all of the questions are 'yes', then you will have successfully completed a 'suitable & sufficient' risk assessment. The proforma checklist covers Key Areas such as:

1. **General arrangements for identifying staff/pupils with special needs**
2. **Outdoors Activities**
3. **Indoors Activities**
4. **Emergency Action if heat stress or heat exhaustion is suspected**

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Proforma 1

Hot Weather Risk Assessment Proforma Checklist

	GENERAL	Yes	No
1	Has senior management taken note of warning alerts for serious weather conditions/ heat wave warnings?		
2	Are thermometers on display within classrooms to record the temperature?		
3	Has senior management considered the needs of pupils and staff that may be at greater risk e.g. young pupils and pregnant staff?		
4	Has the effects hot weather / heat wave conditions been incorporated into the risk assessments plans of activities such as educational visits and work experience placements?		
5	Has senior management taken the opportunity to promote hot weather conditions in a positive way to discuss staying healthy and safe in the sun, general health issues, building design, climate change etc., with the pupils?		
6	Has senior management consulted staff about control measures?		
	Outdoors Areas		
7	Have considerations been made to postpone physical activities such as sports days and other strenuous activities where temperature is above 27°C?		
8	Has children being encouraged to stay in the shade?		
9	Has the clothing policy been adopted to reflect the hot weather conditions and to avoid sunburn?		
10	Has parents been alerted of the need to provide sun cream to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes?		
11	Are children encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot?		
	Indoor Areas		
12	In order to gain a reasonable comfortable in door temperature, a resultant temperature of 23°C should be achieved (resultant		

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	temperature is measured using a globe thermometer) which equates to a temperature of approximately 27°C when using a static thermometer.		
13	Are windows and other ventilation openings in good working order so that adequate ventilation can be provided?		
14	Are adequate indoor blinds provided to reflect heat form the sun? (do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows).		
15	Are steps taken to reduce or curtail activities that may generate heat e.g. use of ovens, Science/D&T practical lessons that use heat sources, ICT Suites etc?		
16	Has appropriate changes been made to the school lunch menu to prevent catering staff from heat exhaustion? (Seek advice from your cook/catering provider).		
17	Has steps been taken to keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum during heat waves?		
18	Have all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers should be switched off when not in use and should not be left in 'standby mode'. Electrical equipment, when left on, or in 'standby' mode generates heat?		
19	Are teachers able to adjust their classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat in preference to others, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children?		
20	Has the use of oscillating mechanical fans or air conditioning units been provided to increase air movement and cool the environment where necessary? (avoid trailing lead which can cause trip hazards).		
21	Where temperature remains 27°C or above after implementing the above measures, then, you should consider getting specialist engineering advice regarding controls measure such as logging of hot water pipes, sun reflection screens on windows etc.		
	Emergency Actions		
22	<p>Are teachers aware of the signs of heat stress and heat exhaustion e.g. Irritability? Children suffering from heat stress will show general signs of discomfort (including those listed below for heat exhaustion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot/Red/Dry Skin • Fatigue • Dizziness 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache <p>These signs will worsen with physical activity or if left untreated and can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.</p>		
23	<p>Are staff aware of the steps that should be taken to reduce body temperature in the event of heat exhaustion or heat stroke? e.g. to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move the child to as cool a room as possible.• Place the child near a fan.• Where available, place cold packs around the neck and in the armpits.		
24	<p>Is staff aware of emergency first-aid measure or when to call for an ambulance?</p>		
25	<p>Any further comments/observations</p>		