School Sun Policy 2025 - 2028

Policy Name	School Sun Policy 2025-2028
Policy Owner	Headteacher
Governing Body or Working Group Approval	SLT
Last Reviewed	Spring 2025
Next Review Date	Spring 2028
Status and Review	Non-statutory and reviewed every three years
Policy Source	

During the summer months, there is the potential for heatwaves. The UK Health Security Agency's published guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settings-before-and-during-hot-weather-teachers-and-other-educational-professionals#:~:text=Children%20should%20not%20take%20part,wide%20brims%20to%20avoid%20sunburn.

Health risks from heat

Children cannot control their body temperature as efficiently as adults during hot weather because they do not sweat as much and so can be at risk of ill-health from heat. Heat-related illness can range from mild heat stress to potentially life-threatening heatstroke. The main risk from heat is dehydration (not having enough water in the body). If sensible precautions are taken children are unlikely to be adversely affected by hot conditions, however, teachers, assistants, school nurses and all child carers should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Heat stress

Children suffering from heat stress may seem out of character or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including those listed below for heat exhaustion). These signs will worsen with physical activity and if left untreated can lead to heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

Heat exhaustion

Symptoms of heat exhaustion vary but include one or more of the following:

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- hot, red and dry skin
- confusion
- Heatstroke

Heatstroke

When the body is exposed to very high temperatures, the mechanism that controls body temperature may stop working. Heatstroke can develop if heat stress or heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning.

Symptoms of heatstroke may include:

- high body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F) is a major sign of heatstroke
- red, hot skin and sweating that then suddenly stops
- fast heartbeat
- fast shallow breathing
- confusion/lack of co-ordination
- fits
- loss of consciousness

Protecting children outdoors
During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

- children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- encourage children playing outdoors to stay in the shade as much as possible
- children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- use sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes
- provide children with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

Protecting children indoors
During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

- open windows as early as possible in the morning before children arrive, or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building – it is important to check insurance conditions and the need for security if windows are to be left open overnight
- almost close windows when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep the heat out while allowing adequate ventilation
- use outdoor sun awnings if available, or close indoor blinds or curtains, but do not let them block window ventilation
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum
- switch off all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers when not in use – equipment should not be left in 'standby mode' as this generates heat
- if possible, use those classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
- oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C – at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration
- if necessary, consider rearranging school start, finish, and play times to avoid teaching during very hot conditions
- encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water

The school sun policy
A sun protection policy will assist in protecting children – Cancer Research UK's sun protection policy guidelines advise that schools allow the reapplication of sunscreen, particularly around midday.

Advice on developing a school sun protection policy is available from the Cancer Research UK https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer#:~:text=When%20the%20sun%20is%20strong,cells%20and%20cause%20skin%20cancer.

Sun safety for children
Sun safety is important at all ages. Protect children's skin using a combination of shade, clothing and sunscreen.

- encourage them to spend time in the shade particularly between 11am-3pm when the sun is strongest.
- covering skin with clothing helps to reduce UV rays reaching the skin, perhaps wearing a t-shirt in the paddling pool or a hat when at the park. Remember sunglasses and hats are a great way to protect the eyes and face, too.
- Sunscreen doesn't protect us completely from sun damage on its own. However, it can be useful for taking care of the parts of skin we can't shade or cover. Apply it regularly and use a sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15 and a 4 or 5 star rating.

Temperature in the workplace
There is no law for maximum working temperature, or when it's too hot to work
https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/managing.htm

Employers must:

- *keep the temperature at a comfortable level, sometimes known as thermal comfort*
- *providing clean and fresh air*

Where the temperature in a classroom would otherwise be uncomfortably high, all reasonable steps should be taken to achieve a reasonably comfortable temperature.

Risk Management
Forward planning is essential to ensure that adequate provision is in place to maintain a reasonable temperature during heatwave conditions. This will also assist in the event of prolonged hot weather.

In addition to the resources shared, please refer to your emergency plans and your risk assessments.

By undertaking and/or reviewing an assessment, schools can identify high-risk individuals/activities/locations and take the appropriate steps to reduce risks and reduce the potential impacts of extreme hot weather.

Extreme hot weather events tend to last for a few weeks of the year and as such, any controls introduced should be proportionate to the risk.

To prepare for extreme hot weather events, schools can also produce their own hot weather plan detailing what action should be taken during these periods. It is important that establishments know when to implement such a plan. Local weather forecasts will give an indication if extreme hot weather is on the way.

All members of staff should be familiar with the plan and their role in implementing it.

Controlling Indoor Hazards

The following are some suggested measures that may be taken:

RISK FACTOR	POSSIBLE CONTROLS
Indoor high temperatures	Stop sun/heat entering the room by: • Keep lights off where possible • Use blinds (Venetian or slatted blinds allow light in, while keeping sun rays out) • Reflective film on windows • Moving workstation away from direct sunlight • Overhangs or awnings outside windows • Insulation - the material acts as a barrier reducing heat flow • Insulating hot pipes or equipment • Curtailing heat-generating activities e.g., use of computers, Bunsen Burners, ovens etc • Increase outside shading by using shutters • Using reflective paint • Provide portable air-conditioning • Provide fixed air-conditioning
Lack of air movement	Improve air movement by: • Ensuring windows can be opened • Ensuring windows are open • Providing fans - wall or ceiling mounted are better
Hot classrooms	Improve physical conditions by: • Relocating classes to cooler areas • Working outside in shaded areas • Rotating use of hot rooms
Strenuous task or activity	Amend the task being undertaken by: • Avoiding strenuous activities or amending the task • Restricting the length of time people are exposed to hot conditions • Arranging for extra breaks to let people cool down • Where practicable, consider arranging for school to start earlier and finish earlier (this may be not be practicable for those requiring transport)
Employee or pupil has a medical condition or vulnerable	Protect the individual by: • Providing regular drinking water in classrooms • Relaxing dress codes

	• Providing surveillance for those with medical conditions • Regularly checking on children's well-being
Lack of awareness on how to respond to high temperatures	Improve staff and pupil awareness by: • Informing staff of signs and symptoms of heat stress and treatment, hot weather plan procedures etc • Informing pupils of what they should do (e.g. plenty of fluids, dress codes etc)

Controlling Outdoor Hazards

The following are some suggested measures that may be taken:

RISK FACTOR	POSSIBLE CONTROLS
Lack of shade	Reduce sun exposure by: • Creating shady areas using trees, awnings, overhangs, parasols etc
Strenuous tasks or activities	Reduce risk by: • Restrict activities outside between 11am-3pm • Reduce strenuous activities or carry out at cooler times • Arranging extra breaks to allow people to cool down • Increase morning break and reduce lunch break
Dehydration/ sunburn/sunstroke	Reduce risks by: • Providing access to drinking water • Ensuring pupils and staff wear wide brimmed sun hats • Relaxing dress code (allow loose, light coloured clothing that covers neck and shoulders etc)
Lack of awareness of sun safety	Improve awareness by: • Incorporate sun protection into curriculum • Promote sun protection to pupils in assemblies, workshops, talks • Train teachers in the importance of sun protection • Inform parents of the importance of sun protection

Further information can be found https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/heat and https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/seasonal-advice/summer