

School heatwave pack



Summer days can be a chance for us all to get outside and enjoy good weather. However, as our climate changes, temperatures in the UK are increasing, and warm spells are lasting longer. Being aware of how the heat can affect our health is crucial.

The heat can affect anyone, but children have a greater risk of serious harm.

This pack includes all the information you and your pupils need to be ready to beat the heat! You'll find fun activities for pupils and top tips to share with families to help everyone stay safe in the sun and during heatwaves.

Spot the signs of heat-related illness

During hot temperatures, it's easy to become dehydrated (not having enough water in the body) or for your body to overheat.

Heat-related illness includes:

- heat stress
- heat exhaustion
- heatstroke.

Keeping an eye out for these signs will help you recognise when hot weather is affecting children's health.



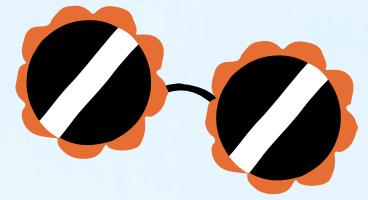
On the hottest day in 2022, the scorching heatwaves in England resulted in 638 more deaths than normal.



Did you know:

Children can't control their body temperatures as efficiently as adults because they don't sweat as much.

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Heat stress

- May seem out of character or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including signs of heat exhaustion).
- Physical activity will cause these symptoms to worsen, which can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion

Symptoms vary, but generally include one or more of the following:

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- confusion
- excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin.



Heatstroke

Signs 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.

If you're concerned about symptoms, seek medical advice. If you think someone has heat stroke, this is a life-threatening emergency so dial 999. Please refer to the NHS website for more guidance.

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Top tips for keeping safe

Stay cool at school

Take the following simple steps to help children keep cool in the classroom.

- Open windows early in the morning to allow heat to escape from the building. Close windows during the day, leaving small gaps to allow for ventilation.
- Close curtains or blinds if possible. If this isn't possible, try keeping pupils away from windows.
- Reduce the use of electric lighting and switch off any electrical equipment not in use, including devices left on standby.
- Use electric fans if the temperature is below 35°C.

For extra coolness

Try placing a bowl of ice cubes in front of the fan to make the circulating air cooler.



Try this!

Set a class (or whole school) goal to drink the recommended amount of water in a day.

Sun safety during heatwaves

Follow these handy tips for sun safety outdoors, during scorching temperatures.

- Stay inside when the temperature exceeds 30°C and avoid vigorous activities. Plan for indoor activities and games for pupils. Stay indoors where possible during 11am and 3pm, avoiding direct sunlight.
- When playing outside, encourage pupils to wear sunhats and stay in the shade as much as possible. Children should also protect their eyes from UV rays by wearing UV protective sunglasses.
- Encourage pupils to come to school wearing sun cream with maximum SPF50 and allow pupils to reapply every 2 hours, particularly 30 minutes before outdoor activities and during peak hours of the day.
- If possible, review the school uniform policy during a heatwave period to allow for loose, light-coloured clothing.
- Remind children to drink plenty of water – more than usual during extreme hot weather. Encouraging children to bring water bottles to school and keeping them at hand will help.

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Sun cream application

These tips will ensure pupils apply sun cream effectively and have maximum protection from the sun. It's also a good idea to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Apply 30 minutes before going out in the sunshine, allowing time for the sun cream to sink in.
- For high protection against the sun's harmful UV rays, use SPF 50 with a 5-star UVA rating for maximum protection.
- Use plenty of sun cream and apply generously using 1-2 tablespoons of suncream for a child's entire body. Applying too thinly gives reduced protection.
- Don't forget to reapply every two hours, even with water-resistant sun cream, as the sun can dry it off your skin or it can rub off.
- Apply sun cream to all exposed skin – don't forget the areas that are easy to miss like neck and ears.



Want an easy way to add an element of fun?

Show your pupils the **Bring Out The Sun Cream** dance to teach them about applying sun cream in a way they'll never forget!

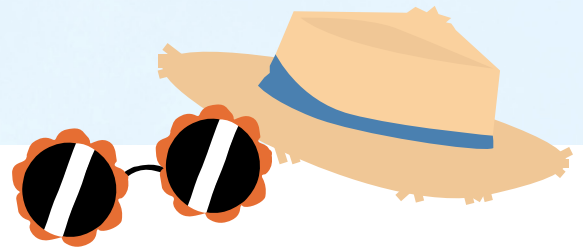


Activity sheets: Hot day, cool kids

Encourage your pupils to discover, learn and stay safe during heatwaves. These fun and effective activities require minimal set up and can be run with the whole class or in small groups.

Alternatively, the resource can be sent home with pupils to promote sun and heatwave safety with families.

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Messaging to families:

Getting parents and families involved is a great way to encourage children to be safe in the sun and during heatwaves. Share these simple and effective sun safety tips with families, as well as some cool tips to help them beat the heat!

Top tips

- Be sure to send children to school with extra water, sun cream and a sunhat. If possible, wearing loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of water at home.

Fun ways to stay cool

- Enjoy cool baths or showers.
- Rinse your hands in cold water or try rubbing an ice cube on your wrists. This is great for an immediate cooling effect!
- Put a flannel or pillowcase in the freezer to help cool children down when going to sleep.
- If you have a hot water bottle, why not try filling it with cold water!
- Use aftersun to help soothe and cool skin that has been in the sun. Keep the aftersun bottle in the fridge for an extra cooling effect.



Want cold water all day long?

Half fill your bottle with water and freeze it on its side overnight to create a long-lasting ice cube!