

Quick Guide for School Staff

FAINTING IN SCHOOLS

Most fainting episodes in pupils are brief, benign, and resolve quickly. But knowing how to respond in the moment and recognising the red flags is what makes all the difference.

Warning signs a pupil may be about to faint:

- Sudden pallor, pale or grey skin – on darker skin tones, look instead for a greyish or ashen tone around the lips, gums, or inner eyelids
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Blurred or tunnel vision
- Cold, clammy sweat
- Ringing in the ears
- Weakness in the legs

If a pupil reports any of these symptoms, take action straight away. Help them lie down and raise their legs, or if that's not possible, to sit with their head lowered forwards.

This can often prevent a faint altogether and reduce the risk of injury if they do lose consciousness.

Call 999 immediately:

- The pupil does not regain consciousness within one to two minutes
- They fainted during exercise – not after, but mid-activity
- There is chest pain or palpitations
- They have sustained a head injury from the fall
- Recovery is slow, incomplete, or the pupil remains confused

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What staff can do when a pupil faints

- Stay calm and reassure other pupils present
- Lay the pupil flat and raise their legs or if that's not possible, to sit with their head lowered forwards
- Do not sit them upright immediately, even if they regain consciousness – standing too soon can cause a second faint.
- Check for injuries, particularly to the head if they fell down
- Monitor breathing and responsiveness
- Once recovered, allow them to rest and offer water
- Contact parents or carers to inform them of the episode
- Record the full details of the episode
- Follow safeguarding and health policies at all times

What staff can do after the fainting episode

- ✓ Allow the pupil to rest before returning to class
- ✓ Offer water and a small snack if appropriate
- ✓ Be mindful of the pupil's dignity: avoid discussing the episode in front of peers