

Quick Guide for School Staff

HEAT EXHAUSTION & HEATSTROKE

Children are particularly vulnerable to hot weather due to their physiology, behaviours, and activity levels

Two of the most common conditions that can affect pupils during warm weather are dehydration and heat exhaustion, which can progress to heat stroke in severe cases..

Heat exhaustion:

Heat exhaustion happens when the body becomes overheated and is unable to cool itself down.

Symptoms may include:

- ⚠ Excessive sweating
- ⚠ Excessive thirst
- ⚠ Nausea or vomiting
- ⚠ Fatigue or weakness
- ⚠ Tiredness and dizziness
- ⚠ Headache or a high temperature
- ⚠ Muscle cramps in the arms, legs and stomach
- ⚠ Fast breathing or heartbeat
- ⚠ Skin becoming pale and clammy – changes in skin colour can be harder to see on brown and black skin
- ⚠ Getting a heat rash

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Heatstroke:

Heatstroke is the most serious heat-related condition and should always be treated as a medical emergency.

It occurs when the body's temperature regulation system fails, causing the core body temperature to rise above 40°C.

If heatstroke is suspected, school staff must call 999 immediately.

Symptoms may include:

- ❗ Still being unwell after 30 minutes of resting in a cool place, being cooled down and drinking fluids
- ❗ High body temperature (often 40°C or above)
- ❗ Hot or dry skin that is not sweating and might look red – this can be harder to see on brown and black skin
- ❗ Confusion or disorientation
- ❗ Rapid breathing or shortness of breath
- ❗ Rapid heartbeat
- ❗ Seizures or fits
- ❗ Loss of consciousness




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What school staff can do if a student shows signs of dehydration or heat-related illness:

- 1 Move them to a cool place**
Take the pupil indoors or into shade and encourage them to rest.
- 2 Encourage fluid intake if possible**
Small, frequent sips of water are best.
- 3 Cool the body**
If possible, use cool compresses, fans, or damp cloths on the neck, wrists, and forehead.
- 4 Monitor symptoms closely**
Watch for any signs of deterioration, particularly confusion, vomiting, or loss of consciousness.
- 5 Seek urgent help if needed**
If heatstroke is suspected, call 999 immediately and continue cooling efforts while waiting for emergency services.

Schools can help reduce risk by:

-  Scheduling outdoor activities outside peak heat hours where possible
-  Providing shaded areas for break times and PE lessons
-  Allowing uniform adjustments during heatwaves where possible