

Libanus Primary School



Sun Protection Policy

A greener place to live, work and visit
Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld



What is this about?

This guidance sheet is to advise schools of the Local Authority's recommendations relating to sun protection for pupils and staff during the school day.

What are the dangers?

The main risks associated with sun exposure are sunburn, heat exhaustion and skin cancer.

People suffering heat stress and heat exhaustion will usually show general signs of discomfort including irritability, fatigue, dizziness, headaches, nausea and hot, red and dry skin. Pupils of nursery and infant age are particularly vulnerable as their body is not able to self-regulate body temperature the same as a healthy adult or older child.

In the short-term sunburn can cause skin to blister and peel, but even mild reddening is a sign of skin damage and can cause significant pain and discomfort. Prolonged exposure can have long-term health effects including skin cancer.

What are your duties?

Head Teachers should take reasonable steps to protect employees and pupils from extremes in temperature and sun exposure. In order to do this effectively head teachers should consider the following points:

- Are there enough shaded areas provided?
- Are staff and pupils appropriately dressed for outside activities?
- Is fresh drinking water available to all pupils and staff during outside activities?
- Are outside activities structured / planned to allow pupils and staff to go into shaded areas and obtain a cold drink.

Shaded areas

All schools should have suitable shaded areas, consisting of permanent structures or feature that provides shade sufficient for all pupils and staff. The type of shaded area required will depend on the layout of the school's outside areas and the number of naturally occurring shaded areas such as those provided by trees.

Schools which have sufficient naturally shaded areas do not have to provide additional purpose-built structures such as canopies etc.

Head teachers should consider the following factors when deciding if they have sufficient shaded areas:

- The layout of the school's outside areas
- Current arrangements for outside activities such as lessons and break times
- The amount of naturally occurring shade - does this change throughout the day
- The number of people likely to be in these areas at any one time.

If additional shade is needed careful consideration should be given to the type of structure. There are many different types of sun shade structures, some of which require planning permission, and some that are temporary. Below are some examples of the types of shades available:

Cover up

Covering the skin is one of the best ways to avoid skin damage from sun exposure. Parents should be encouraged to send pupils to school in suitable clothing, such as long sleeved cotton tops and sun hats. Staff who are required to work outside should also be encouraged to wear suitable clothing including long sleeve cotton sleeves, hats and suitable footwear.

Schools may wish to purchase suitable hats, such as 'legionnaire hats' with a flap at the back to protect the neck, or wide brim sun hats, which can be provided to pupils and staff during breaks and outside activities.

Sunscreen

School staff should not be asked to apply sunscreen to pupils, and it is recommended that parents be discouraged from providing pupils with sunscreen to apply themselves during the school day. Parents and guardians should be advised to apply suitable sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF) and UVA star rating to their child prior to taking them to school which, combined with the provision of shaded areas for play and outdoor lessons, should offer adequate protection for the duration of the school day.

School staff should be informed that they are not to apply sunscreen to pupils during school hours, including staff applying the sun cream to their own children during the school day where applicable.

Access to drinking water

Head teachers should provide both pupils and staff with access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Children should be actively encouraged to drink. This is particularly important before and after periods of play activity outside during particularly warm weather periods.

Plan school activities

The majority of school activities occur during the hours that the sun's ultra violet (UV) emissions are at the greatest (11am and 3pm). Head teachers should therefore plan activities which take place outside in such a way as to reduce the risk associated with the sun's heat and harmful UV rays.

Head teachers should:

- Structure activities in such a way as to allow pupils and staff to periodically go into shaded areas
- Check that all persons are wearing suitable clothing including long sleeve cotton tops and hats.
- Make arrangements to provide fresh drinking water during outside activities.
- Be particularly mindful of activities, games or educational visits where there are long periods in outdoor environments.

- Consider appropriate measures to protect pupils from prolonged sun exposure, and reapplication of sunscreen when prolonged exposure is unavoidable for all off-site educational visits – this should form part of the risk assessment for the educational visit.

What about pupils with medical conditions

Any pupil who has medical conditions, which may put them at greater risk of developing heat stress, heat exhaustion or skin damage should be considered on a case-by-case basis for which a medical care plan would be created.

Communicating with parents and guardians

Headteachers and the Board of Governors should decide what measures are appropriate for the school and implement them in a timely fashion. The school should communicate the sun protection measures to parents and guardians and advise them what they need to do. Parents and guardians should also be informed that they must notify the school of their child having any medical condition which may put them at greater risk of developing heat stress, heat exhaustion or skin damage, and that the measures that the school will take to minimise the risk will be judged on an individual case-by-case basis.

What do we do during a heat wave?

The Local Authority will forward guidance to schools relating to any expected or confirmed heat waves. Schools will receive comprehensive advice on managing the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff during periods of extreme hot weather.

Important points to remember:

- Schools should provide suitable shaded areas.
- Schools should plan outdoor activities to make maximum use of shaded areas.
- Schools should provide a supply of fresh drinking water and encourage children to take on fluids.
- Schools should advise parents and guardians on suitable clothing for pupils.
- Schools should inform parents and guardians that school staff will not be permitted to apply sunscreen to pupils.
- Sunscreen is just one measure to protect from the harmful effects of the sun – covering the skin and regularly seeking shelter (particularly between 12 noon and 3pm) are more effective.
- Pupils with medical conditions will be dealt with on an individual case by case basis.
- The Local Authority will notify schools of any weather warnings received from the Met Office in relation to heat waves.

Where can I get further information and advice?

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this bulletin, or if you require additional information regarding any of the points raised please contact the Health and Safety Division - HEALTHANDSAFETY@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK