



Jane Balderstone
Director for Education Estates
Department for Education
Cc: Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education

By email to jane.balderstone@education.gov.uk,
bridget.phillipson.mp@parliament.uk

Tuesday 23rd June

Dear Jane,

INTRODUCTION OF EMERGENCY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS TO ALLIEVIATE EFFECTS OF HIGH TEMPERATURES

We write to you with high urgency in relation to the extreme temperatures that many parts of the United Kingdom are currently experiencing. We appreciate that UKHSA has previously published guidance on the control of temperatures in schools.

However, union members are increasingly contacting GMB in desperation, as current measures to cool their classrooms, kitchens and workplaces are inadequate in the current heatwave. Temperatures exceeding 30 degrees are significantly more harmful than 25 degrees, and members expect additional measures to reduce temperatures to more manageable levels.

We are currently advising our members to engage with their school leaders to identify literal hotspots, and to ensure that these are addressed. Our guidance is attached to this emailed letter for your information. To this end, we would be grateful if you would confirm as soon as possible:

- That school leaders have been instructed to perform frequent risk assessments to identify and address health hazards relating to temperature.

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- That the Department for Education will support the implementation of measures to mitigate these hazards by reducing temperatures to comfortable levels, through the provision of fans and mobile air conditioning units where needed.
- That funding will be made available to purchase such units, alongside additional supplies of water, where needed.
- That DfE recognises that extreme temperatures will be an annual challenge and sees the merit in negotiating policy in conjunction with trades unions that specifies how heatwaves should be practically managed in future.
- That, where temperatures cannot be reduced to comfortable temperatures due to the fabric of school buildings, school leaders will be encouraged to consider alternative methods of education provision, including switching to home learning and ultimately school closures.
- And that these positions shall apply to all schools and colleges in the UK, whether part of academy chains, free schools, or local authority maintained.

This is an issue of the utmost urgency for GMB, and we would appreciate a response, and more importantly action, as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Stacey Booth

GMB National Officer for Schools and Academies

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