



Advice to help you cope in a heat wave

At the time of year when schools are winding down before the summer vacation with lots of fun outdoor activities, it is really important to consider safety tips for hot weather, especially during a heat wave.

See below for some practical steps you can take to safeguard yourself and your students in the heat.

Traveling to work

- Whether you are traveling by car, on foot or by public transportation, take water with you drink sports drinks to replace salts lost in perspiration avoid caffeine to prevent dehydration.
- Many modes of transportation will be hot in this weather so calculate the quickest route, perhaps even leave earlier to beat the crowds.
- On public transportation, try to limit the amount of bags/work you have to carry to reduce the chances of your over-heating or becoming stressed.
- Keep your cool among passengers stressed by over-heated carriages/buses by breathing deeply and slowly.
- Offer your seat to pregnant women and older people and make space where possible for fellow travellers.
- Bring a change of clothes so that you start the day feeling fresh, or keep one in your classroom or storage area.
- If the school has a strict staff dress code, ask the principal to consider allowing loose, comfortable clothing rather than suits and shirts.
- Take wet wipes/water spray/mini fan to cool yourself down.

In the classroom

- If there are any blinds or curtains, keep them drawn over night and throughout the day to cool the room.
- If you don't already have them, ask the principal/facilities manager about renting air conditioning units.
- Consider which classrooms fall in direct sunlight and rearrange lessons so the coolest ones are used during the hottest part of the day.
- Keep bottles/jugs of water for yourself and pupils.

Outside activities

- Ensure that pupils and staff have access to water and shade.
- Try to avoid being outdoors during the hottest part of the day (11am - 3pm) if at all possible.
- Wear a hat and loose, breathable clothing.
- Check the school's policy on sun cream application to protect pupils' skin.

Where can I find more information?

The Center for Disease Control has prepared a guide for coping with Extreme Heat - you can access the information at the following site:

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp.

The Red Cross also has a useful webpage and additional resources on heat waves accessible here:

www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_243_,00.html.