

# HEALTH & SAFETY BULLETIN

## Workplace Temperatures in Schools & Other Educational Establishments **184**

### 1. Introduction

For Headteachers and Premises Controllers

Part of Barnet Council's commitment to health, safety and welfare at work, as described in the Health Safety and Welfare Policy is to provide a safe and comfortable workplace for all employees, and for the pupils, students and young people in schools and other educational establishments. This reflects the duties imposed by the Workplace (health, safety and welfare) Regulations 1992, which state that:

- During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable,
- Any heating or cooling system used may not be injurious or offensive to any persons,
- A sufficient number of thermometers shall be provided for the monitoring of temperatures.

### 2. Minimum temperatures

The approved code of practice attached to the Workplace Regulations states that the minimum temperature in offices should normally be **16°Celsius** (about 61° Fahrenheit).

The Education (school premises) Regulations 1999 contain specific temperature targets for schools. They are as follows:

Room/Area Type	Temperature
Classrooms (teaching or private study areas)	<b>18°C</b>
Areas where there is a lower than normal level of physical activity because of sickness or physical disability including sick rooms and isolation rooms but not other sleeping accommodation	<b>21°C</b>
Areas where there is a higher than normal level of physical activity (for example arising out of physical education) and washrooms, sleeping accommodation and circulation spaces.	<b>15°C</b>

### 3. Maximum Temperatures

There is no maximum temperature stated in any regulations, although the duty to provide a reasonable temperature still remains. The following suggestions may be used in an attempt to keep temperatures comfortable:

- Insulating hot pipes or equipment,
- Switching off electrical equipment when it is not in use,
- Use lower power electrical equipment where possible (eg flat screens for computers),
- Provide cold drinks (provision of drinking water is also a requirement of the workplace regulations),
- Shading windows, or covering them with solar reflective film (outdoor shades reduce heat more effectively than indoor blinds),

Where a comfortable temperature cannot be achieved, local cooling methods, such as fans or air coolers can be used. These must be located in such a way that they do not create a trip hazard, or block circulation and/or fire escape routes.

If, despite these methods, the temperature is still uncomfortable, these measures should also be considered:

- Allowing longer or more frequent breaks from work or lessons, or adjustment to the school day, starting and finishing earlier, to avoid the very hot afternoon weather,
- Changes to the school uniform
- Carrying out activities in cooler areas, or in shaded areas or structures, such as gazebos outside where possible,
- Assessing the risks of any hard physical activity, including PE, games and sports, or heat generating activities, such as work with furnaces, Bunsen burners, clay firing and food technology to decide whether it is still appropriate to continue, or if it should be delayed until the weather is cooler. This provision is intended more for work of a physical nature, but may also be used where temperatures are particularly high or for people with a condition that may pose a risk of overheating or make them particularly uncomfortable, for example, pregnancy.

Implementation of any of these measures should be dealt with by managers on a case-by-case basis, having first consulted with all stakeholders, including parents and Trade Unions, as appropriate.

**If you require any further guidance or advice, please contact the Health and Safety Unit on 020 8359 7953.**