

Managing attendance in warm and hot weather



Sheffield sees higher attendance over the summer period overall, but some schools have identified significant issues with attendance in hot weather. This is reflected in national research which suggests high temperatures increase absence rates¹.

Reported reasons for increased levels of absence during hot weather in Sheffield include:

- Parent, carer and student perceptions that it is too hot at school and that children will not be safe
- illness (including heat stress, heatstroke and sunburn) due to inappropriate clothing, dehydration and lack of sun protection
- lack of quality sleep (due to hot homes) or increased leisure activities outside of school leaving students too tired to attend school
- prioritising holidays/leisure activities

Tips for managing attendance in hot weather

1. Make changes that create confidence that school is safe in hot weather and are attractive to students and carers

Focus on changes that:

- listen to student and carer concerns
- reduce temperatures and increase thermal comfort
- are attractive to carers and create motivation for students to attend and to be ready to learn, for example:
 - ✓ ensuring PE or lesson alternatives are fun or appealing
 - ✓ providing ice pops or healthy and cooling snacks
 - ✓ changes that are easy for parents to engage with (e.g. allowing clothing that students already use for PE rather than requiring additional items; holding sports day in the morning rather than afternoon can be easier and more attractive for many parents rather than finishing work early)
 - ✓ attractive adaptations may be most effective on Mondays and Fridays when there is more temptation for families to take children out of school

2. Communicate in an engaging and timely manner

Use your communication channels with parents to:

- create confidence that action is being taken to keep school cool and safe and that student needs are being considered
- encourage the bringing of water bottles, appropriate clothing and sunscreen

- share information on practical ways to keep students cooler at home

Time your communications well:

- Include information about your approach to summer heat at the start of the summer term in newsletters and on your website (see the resources within this toolkit for template letters and website/newsletter content)
- Send reminders or notify parents about fun activities/adaptations ahead of hot weather

3. Use general attendance management good practice

Where there is a pattern of absence during hot weather, informal conversations with parents before and after hot weather events or at the start of the summer can allow school to understand the barriers to attendance and provide timely support.

You can find more information on good attendance practice on the [Learn Sheffield](#) website.

ⁱ [Temperature and school absences: evidence from England | Population and Environment | Springer Nature Link](#)