



One minute guide to...

Advice during adverse cold weather

Why is it important to be careful in cold weather?

Being outdoors is so important for children, pupils, and students for their mental and physical wellbeing. However they can be at risk of harm through their physiology (especially those under 5 years, and with underlying health conditions), and behaviour, when the weather is very cold, snowy, and/or icy.

Parents/carers should particularly seek advice from their clinical team/GP if their child is clinically vulnerable.

What are the risks of exposure to adverse cold weather?

It can increase (alongside other health problems):

- Respiratory infections
- Skin conditions for e.g. eczema
- Mental health problems
- Accidents (slips, falls etc.)

What to do during adverse cold weather to reduce the hazards?

- gritting and removing ice and/or snow from priority areas and routes
- prioritising maintenance of heating systems to keep rooms being used warm.
- closing rooms or buildings that are too cold for children, young people, and staff members to use.
- consider [ventilating indoor spaces](#), especially those where people gather, even for short periods each day to help reduce the risk of spread of infection.

What to do to reduce the risk of infections:

- Reinforce [hand and respiratory hygiene](#) for children and staff, and [taking other steps to prevent the spread of infections](#) during the winter.
- Provide advice on appropriate clothing for adverse cold weather, ice, or snow.
- Provide parents with [information on children attending school or early years settings when ill](#)
- Encourage parents/carers to keep their children up to date with [routine immunisations](#)
- Eligible staff should be encouraged to have vaccinations for [COVID-19](#) and/or [flu](#)

Specific advice for babies:

Staff in nurseries and other early years settings should be mindful that, while it is important to ensure babies are appropriately protected from cold, they should also not get too hot. Overheating can increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies can overheat because of too much bedding or clothing, or because the room is too hot. More information from NHS can be found at: [how to reduce the risk of babies overheating](#).

Further Information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-keep-well-leaflet-gives-advice-on-staying-healthy-in-cold-weather>

DfE: Further information about [supporting children with medical conditions](#)

Further advice regarding keeping buildings warm during adverse cold weather can be adapted from guidance below:

- DfE: [standards for school premises](#) which include responses to adverse cold weather.
- Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance on [managing cold temperatures in the workplace](#), and [icy conditions and winter weather](#)
- Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) [guidelines on ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality in schools](#)

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