

## Heating and Ventilation in Schools Checklist for EIS Reps Autumn/Winter 2021

### Introduction

Revised guidance from the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) has been issued to local authorities. This revised guidance contains a section which covers [the issues of heating and ventilation in schools](#)<sup>1</sup>. The revised section aims to strike an appropriate balance between providing adequate heating and ventilation in schools whilst minimising the risks of Covid transmission as schools head into the late autumn and winter period.

Schools have been advised to ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained with reference to the appropriate health and safety regulations. The precise balance to be struck, and the most effective ways of doing so, will depend heavily on local factors including building design, location and prevailing weather conditions.

Given the technical nature of some of the work in this area, the EIS does not expect school reps to have specialist expertise. However, EIS representatives are encouraged to establish overarching principles which will apply in their establishments and should seek to ensure that there is an adequate mechanism for raising concerns on behalf of members.

### Key Health and Safety Principles

- The EIS does not expect its members to continue to work in situations in which the legal requirements concerning the health, safety and welfare of employees and others are not being met.
- Schools should as a minimum ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained, with reference to the [School Premises Regulations](#)<sup>2</sup>. While minimum requirements vary depending on the specific part of the school estate, for classrooms the regulations stipulate 2 air changes per hour and a temperature of 17° C.
- Reference should also be made to the [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992 Approved Code of Practice and Guidance](#)<sup>3</sup>. These 1992 Regulations which apply to all workplaces, including schools, set out requirements on minimum temperatures in all workplaces. Regulation 7 requires that temperatures shall be “reasonable” and the accompanying Approved Code of Practice defines this as “normally at least 16 degrees Celsius” (para 61).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/overview/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi?title=School%20Premises%20%28General%20Requirements%20and%20Standards%29%20%28Scotland%29%20Regulations>

- The duty of employers under Health and Safety legislation applies equally to ensuring that the advised mitigations are in place in relation to the threat of Covid 19.
- EIS reps should check that all the arrangements detailed in the revised CERG guidance on heating and ventilation are being implemented.
- There should be continued compliance with the safety precautions and procedures identified in the risk assessments.

## CO2 Monitoring

Previous Scottish Government guidance on ventilation continues to apply. In addition, the following strengthened guidance on CO2 monitoring should be followed by local authorities.

Local authorities should ensure that all schools have access to CO2 monitoring, whether via mobile or fixed devices. This is to support the goal of all school buildings, including all learning and teaching spaces, being assessed for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required.

Local authorities and other providers should ensure the information they gather as a result of the CO2 monitoring is used to inform actions to improve ventilation in schools where required. This may include, for example:

- Remedial works where appropriate (e.g. accelerated maintenance to remedy windows that will not open or faulty ventilation).
- Providing further guidance to users (e.g. on regular opening of windows, etc.).

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Detailed guidance on workplace temperature and thermal comfort is available on HSE's website [www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal](http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal).

An EIS Heating and Ventilation Checklist is enclosed. It is intended for use as a guide for EIS reps to check that the arrangements detailed in the revised CERG guidance on heating and ventilation are being implemented in your school.

You can use this checklist as a basis to investigate complaints about heating and ventilation issues in buildings.

Following completion of the checklist, you should draw your headteacher's attention to any issues that need to be addressed. A copy should also be sent to your LA Secretary to enable the EIS to monitor and provide support when required.

In addition, you should request an Action Plan from your headteacher which outlines the timescales for remedies to be provided which address the issues raised.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>