

## Heating and Ventilation in Schools Checklist for EIS Reps Autumn/Winter 2020

### Introduction

Revised guidance from the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) has been issued to local authorities. This revised guidance contains an enhanced Overview 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.

Note - **A CERG web page**<sup>2</sup> has been launched on the Education Scotland website. This provides a single point of access to guidance and support for COVID-19 recovery. It includes key advice from the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG), and from sources approved by CERG.

It will be updated every Monday until further notice. Where there are revised versions of earlier publications, these revisions will be highlighted.

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>3</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.

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/covid-19-education-recovery/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi?title=School%20Premises%20%28General%20Requirements%20and%20Standards%29%20%28Scotland%29%20Regulations>

Reference should also be made to the **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Approved Code of Practice and Guidance**<sup>4</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 °C” (60 °F) (para 43) during “the length of time people are likely to be there” (para 49).

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.

## **EIS Heating and Ventilation Checklist Autumn/Winter 2020**

An EIS Heating and Ventilation Checklist is attached. 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>4</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>