

# Hot weather guidance for Duke of Edinburgh Award visits

With many Local Authorities issuing hot weather warnings, we have drafted the below high-level statement for your consideration around Duke of Edinburgh Award visits. Still, the content is helpful for all visits outdoors. Please check your employer's guidance as this may differ from our advice below.

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Forecasts and prevailing weather conditions should be a hazard included in your risk assessment, and you should consider whether you can postpone the visit.

* If it's not reasonably practicable to rearrange the expedition/visit to a time of less hazardous weather, then you should consider:
* Changing the route/walking times to be less physically demanding and exposed to the sun at its strongest. Seek shade.
* Lightening the load the groups carry. You may consider dropping tents by vehicle at campsites etc.
* Ensure participants have appropriate clothing- wicking, lightweight, sleeves, sunglasses and hat for sun protection etc.
* Ensure participants have suitable and sufficient sun cream and remind them to apply regularly.
* Ensure participants have a sufficient water supply—you may need to carry extra for them and top up at checkpoints.
* Increase supervision levels/checkpointing to ensure the group is coping.
* Participants should be aware of how to recognise the effect of heat and dehydration on themselves and others; you could use:
	+ [www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/)
	+ [www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/#check-if-youre-dehydrated](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/#check-if-youre-dehydrated/) and how to avoid this.
* Know your escape procedures if the expedition needs to cease. Please also see FAQ 2 on: [www.dofe.org/run/expedition-faqs](http://www.dofe.org/run/expedition-faqs)

[The Department of Health and Social Care also released guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settings-during-heatwaves-for-teachers-and-professionals) for Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals.

This states:

## Protecting children outdoors

During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

* children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
* encourage children playing outdoors to stay in the shade as much as possible
* children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
* use sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes
* provide children with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot