

Requirements for School Policy and Responsibilities for Extreme Heat Response

(Education Law § 409-n)

The law requires New York State Public Schools, charter schools, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to identify policy actions and operational responsibilities in response to extreme heat conditions.

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Overview of Education Law § 409-n

- Schools are required to develop a policy for ensuring health and safety on extreme heat condition days.
- In New York State, an “extreme heat condition day” is when the indoor occupiable spaces are 82°F or higher. When the indoor temperature reaches 82°F, the district’s extreme heat policy must be implemented. This does not include kitchen spaces used for food preparation.
- Temperature must be measured at a shaded location, 3 feet above the floor, near the center of the room.
- At 88°F or higher, plans should include relocating students and staff where practical.

Policy Development

- Involve BOCES, health & safety committees, nurses, and facilities staff in developing extreme heat response policies and preparedness plans.
- Integrate extreme heat plans into the district’s existing School Safety Plan.
- Identify relocation spaces and access to cooling centers in advance of extreme heat conditions.
- Define within the policy staff roles for monitoring, response, and documentation.
- Designate a heat response coordinator (e.g., school nurse/ BOCES representative) to coordinate response and communicate with district leadership when needed.
- Document temperature readings, actions taken, communications, and other heat-related incidents.
- Plan for how to support children that may be more sensitive to heat, such as those with asthma, chronic health conditions, disabilities, or who take certain medications.
- Consider creating an end-of-season report including topics like extreme heat-related incidents.

Best Practices

- Monitor the heat index to anticipate when indoor temperatures may rise.
- Modify schedules during hot days. Avoid excessive physical activity and reduce heat from lighting and other unused electronics.
- Ensure access to water filling stations and encourage hydration breaks throughout the day.
- Establish a clear communication system between nurses, facilities staff, BOCES, and families.
- Consider activating precautionary steps 1–2°F below 82°F to allow time for response.

School Environmental Health (SEHP) Resource

SEHP has developed an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management Plan Toolkit that includes guidance and sample language for extreme heat planning. Find more information and examples [here](#).

New York State School Environmental Health Program

health.ny.gov/SchoolEnviroHealth

