

Pupils left outside for up to two hours in baking heat during evacuation review

School bosses have vowed to review evacuation procedures after pupils were left out on a playing field for up to two hours in baking heat earlier this week.

Parents took to social media to vent their anger after a suspected chemical leak saw students sent out of Dunbar Grammar School on Monday.

Some said their children had been left exposed in soaring temperatures with no water or shelter as emergency services went into the building to investigate the danger.

East Lothian Council said that it would be looking for 'learning points' from the incident to ensure future evacuations are as effective as possible.

The incident occurred just before lunch time on Monday at the school with all students sent to the astro turf which is the assembly point for any evacuation.

As temperatures rose to 24 degrees on the sunny day, pupils who had been told to leave their bags in classrooms as is standard in an emergency evacuation, remained on the pitch for around two hours.

Pictures of emergency service vehicles at the school began emerging on social media shortly after the alarm was raised

sparking concern from parents unable to get in touch with their children.

And there was anger later when they discovered youngsters had been out in the sun for hours with one parent saying their son called them to say they had no water and had been told they could not leave the pitch.

Head teacher Claire Sowther said in a letter sent to parents and carers after the event that pupils were 'exemplary' as they followed the procedures in place for an emergency.

She said that as it became clear the incident was stretching into the afternoon senior students were sent home and a GroupCall made to parents and carers alerting them to the situation.

She said: "Water was sourced for S2/3 students and this coincided with us having limited access to a part of the building so we could take the S2/3 students back inside."

Primary 7 pupils transitioning to the new S1 year at the school were not in attendance during the incident.

East Lothian Council said it was looking at what happened on Monday.

A spokesperson said: "We are keen to identify any learning points from the response to ensure evacuation procedures are as effective as possible."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter