

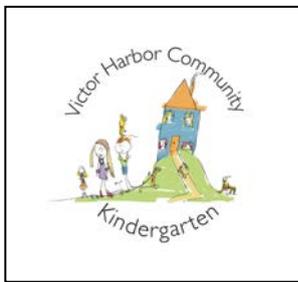
Preschool Hot Weather Policy

This policy is applicable to: Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten Staff and Volunteers.
All DECD Preschool Sites

Further assistance: Centre Director

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Preschool Hot Weather Policy

Contents

1. Title
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. Objectives
5. Policy Details
6. Roles and Responsibilities
7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
8. Definitions and Abbreviations
9. References
10. Policy Approval

1. Title

Preschool Hot Weather Policy

2. Purpose

This policy provides guidance and direction to the Director and staff of the Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten during times of extreme heat. This policy is in place to protect the well being and safety of staff and children at the centre.

The policy will outline site-specific arrangements in the case of extreme hot weather, including strategies aimed at reducing the risk of heat related illnesses.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, children and volunteers at the Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten.

4. Objectives

The objectives of this policy will include the following goals:

1. To reduce the risk of heat related illnesses for children at the centre
2. To comply with the relevant occupational, health and safety legislation requirements for all staff members and volunteers at the centre

This policy will provide the foundation for the centre and will include the following responsibilities:

1. All staff must take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others present at the centre.
2. The Director has a duty of care to behave in a manner that ensures no foreseeable harm falls upon the children and staff under their care (Site Leaders and the Law).
3. That the objectives of the Children's Services Act 1985 are upheld:

*Part 2 – Administration, Division 1 – General, point 7 Objects - number (2): **In dealing with children under the Act, the Minister shall regard the interest of the children as the paramount consideration.***

4. That the requirements of the National Quality Standards are met:

*Nation Quality Standard - Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Quality Area 2: Standards and Elements – Standard 2.3 – Element 2.3.2: **Reasonable steps will be taken to identify and manage risks, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards.***

5. The centre will provide a safe and comfortable environment for all children
6. To maintain a comfortable environment for the children, heating and cooling appliances will present at the centre to ensure the appropriate temperature is maintained
7. Advice obtained from the Cancer Council of South Australia on sun protection practices will be followed by all staff members

5. Policy Details

1. Research on heat related illnesses in children:

- a. This policy recognises that children are at a greater risk of heat related illnesses compared with adults. This is due to their reduced ability to respond to environmental changes and acclimatisation to extreme hot weather
- b. As reported by Sports Medicine Australia – ‘Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults in warm and hot weather. They have greater difficulty getting rid of heat; they looked flushed and feel hotter and more stressed than adults’.

2. Strategies to reduce heat related illnesses in children:

- a. **Shade** – activities conducted in periods of hot weather will be undertaken in shaded areas or inside
- b. **Drinks** – children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day.
- c. Cool water is available from insulated water containers located throughout the centre
- d. Frozen ice cubes are added to the insulated water containers on hot days
- e. **Clothing** – Parents are encouraged to dress their child in clothing that minimises the chance of the child overheating. Dressing the child in layers that can be removed during activities is the best option
- f. **Lunch** – Children’s lunch boxes are to be kept in the fridge while at the centre. It is recommended that an icepack be included to keep the food cool and lessen the chance of bacterial growth on very hot days

3. Building Design

- a. The Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten is located in a well-ventilated position, situated alongside the Inman River and two streets away from the beachfront
- b. This allows fresh air to flow through the centre via the playground and the side of the building
- c. The building is solid brick with an open floor plan that allows for excellent airflow throughout the centre
- d. A large, covered veranda area is available for shaded, outdoor activities
- e. There is an adequate number of ceiling fans present throughout the centre
- f. There are four air conditioning units located throughout the centre, which will be activated as required
- g. The cooling systems will be serviced every three months

4. Playground Design

- a. The centre has four, well ventilated outdoor areas
- b. Natural ventilation is available due to the proximity of the centre to the Inman River
- c. There are four shaded areas provided for the children to play in a sun safe environment

5. Site-specific Arrangement in Case of Hot Weather

- a. It is recognised that the risk of heat stress is a factor of both air temperature and relative humidity levels
- b. Children will be encouraged to drink cool water throughout the day to ensure adequate hydration and reduce the risk of heat stress
- c. Staff will provide the children with low intensity, indoor activities throughout the day to reduce the risk of heat stress

6. Contingency Plan

- a. If there is a power outage caused by extreme hot weather, staff will set up waterplay activities in the shaded, outdoor areas
- b. Similarly, if the cooling system is shut down, staff will set up waterplay activities in the shaded, outdoor areas

6. Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Centre Director** – This policy is issued under the authority of the Centre Director
2. **Site Managers** – Site managers are responsible for the maintenance and review of this policy
3. **Staff Members** – Staff members are responsible for following and implementing the strategies highlighted this policy

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Victor Harbor Community Kindergarten will review and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy annually. The Director will ensure that all staff members are consulted and provided with the necessary instruction, training and supervision to ensure that control measures are effectively implemented.

8. Definitions and Abbreviations

Within this document, the following terms have the meanings given:

Term	Meaning
Extreme Heat	38°C or above
Heat Related Illness	The child presents with a higher than average temperature, is flushed, lethargic, vomiting, unresponsive – medical assistance will be requested where appropriate

9. References

1. Sports Medicine of Australia
2. Cancer Council of South Australia

10. Policy Approval

Review 2019

Approved and Checked By:

Centre Director.....Date

Governing Council
Representative.....Date