



Drafted by	Zeba Bilal
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# Heat Health Policy

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## Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our kindergarten are protected from heat related ailments and to ensure Ewing Kindergarten has measures in place to prepare and manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather.

## Policy Statement

### Values

Ewing Kindergarten is committed to provide an environment that ensures the health and safety of children, Teachers/Educators and visitors at all times. Extreme heat or heatwave is a period of unusual and comfortable hot weather that can negatively affect health. Children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress therefore we must be able to recognise and treat heat related illness and have strategies to manage prolonged period of extreme heat

### Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Ewing Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities

## Background and Legislative Requirements and Guiding Documents

### Background

**To minimise the risks associated with extreme hot weather Ewing Kindergarten will review and where practicable and appropriate, implement the following strategies:**

- Ensure the kindergarten's emergency management plan risk assessment considers extreme heat
- Ensure provision for adequate shade on kindergarten grounds from man-made structures (tents, sails and umbrellas) and/or trees
- Educate and encourage children and staff to stay hydrated
- Have water readily available for children to have access to at all times
- Review first aid kits to provide for additional ice packs and hydrolytes

### Legislative Requirements

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
  - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
    - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

## Strategies for Policy Implementation/ Procedures

This policy is for implementation throughout the year.

It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of Ewing Kindergarten will use the following heat protection strategies:

- Take care to protect the skin in line with Ewing kindergarten’s sun safe policy.
- Parents are encouraged to make sure their child is dressed in light layers that they can easily remove if they are feeling hot.
- Sunscreen is applied to all children twice per day or more if required

Care will be taken to make sure all those accessing Ewing Kindergarten are well hydrated on hot days and food is kept safe.

- All children will need to bring a water bottle to access water throughout the day. Water bottles and cups will be accessible and replenished throughout the day.
- Regular reminders to ‘have a drink’ will be given to children on days the temperature is expected to peak above 30 degrees.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a cold pack in their child’s lunch bag / box.
- Lunch bags / boxes will be stored inside the kindergarten which is air conditioned on hot days.

Use the shade of trees, shade sails whenever outdoors.

- Outside activities will be set up in the shade on days the temperature is expected to exceed 30 degrees.
- Children will be actively discouraged from spending time in unshaded areas on days the temperature is expected to peak on or above 30 degrees.
- Daily kindergarten routine will be rearranged on days the temperature is expected to peak on or above 36 degrees to include outside play first thing in the morning
- All children will be kept indoors after 10am on days the temperature is expected to peak above 36 degrees.
- The kindergarten is serviced by air-conditioners and these will be put on upon arrival in the morning to assist in regulating room temperatures throughout course of the day.

- The staff will respect the wishes of a parent who wants to collect their child early on hot days due to their own families hot weather management.

#### **Operation during extreme heat:**

- The kindergarten will continual to be operational during temperatures above 36 degrees
- If there is a major power outage and temperature exceeds 35 degrees, families will be contacted to collect their child if they choose to.
- Staff will remain on duty and kindergarten session will continue to be operational for those children that have not been collected
- Children remaining at kindergarten will be kept as comfortable as possible using the following strategies:
  - Water play
  - Ice blocks
  - Windows and door kept closed
  - Blinds drawn
  - Quiet activities

During a period of extreme heat Ewing Kindergarten will also actively:

- ensure air-conditioning units are serviced/maintained and in proper working order
- ensure indoor spaces have open doors and windows when breeze is cool or air conditioning access during activities
- modifying or postponing any planned vigorous activity or excursions
- rescheduling/moving classes to alternate spaces (using 3 year old classroom as alternate space if no 3 year old class is in attendance)
- having spare suitable clothing options for children to change into if required
- varying daily activities by reducing outdoor play to early morning and late afternoon
- lower blinds to reduce sun impact
- provide water/ice activities for children
- follow and implement sun safe policy
- keep external doors closed to maximise air-conditioning unit effect
- close doors behind when moving from one area to another to assist with air-conditioning effect

#### **Heat related first aid**

**It is important that Ewing Kindergarten staff know signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to respond**

Some heat-related illnesses and common symptoms include:

- deterioration in existing medical conditions
- heat rash
- heat cramps - these include muscle pains or spasms
- dizziness and fainting
- heat exhaustion - warning signs may include paleness and sweating, rapid heart rate, muscle cramps headache, nausea and vomiting, dizziness or fainting.
- heatstroke - The person may stagger, appear confused, have a fit, collapse and become unconscious. **This is a medical emergency and requires urgent attention.**

Treatment options vary according to the type of heat-related illness. If a child, staff member or visitor shows any sign of heat exhaustion or heatstroke first aid must be applied and medical assistance sought immediately.

## Related Policies and Procedures

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Safe
- Emergency and Evacuation Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Management of First Aid
- Nutrition and Active Play Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Sun Protection
- Supervision of Children Policy

## Evaluation

**In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:**

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.