



Inclement Weather and Heat Stress Policy

Inclement weather can affect everyday activities and comes in many forms. Inclement weather includes extreme high temperatures, high UV levels, heavy rain, hail and snow, strong winds, severe dust storm, lightning or thunderstorm or flooding.

This policy applies all year round as the environment in South Australia can pose risks related to heat exposure and dehydration, particularly for young children.

During hot weather, exercise places some people at risk of heat related illness. If left untreated, heat related illness can lead to the more serious and potentially life-threatening condition of heat stroke.

At Gawler and District College B-12 Children's Centre we promote:

- Positive attitudes towards environmental conditions
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of heat stress and heat related health conditions.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about own regulation of exposure in hot weather.

Implementation:

Educators will

- Monitor daily weather forecasts (such as [Bureau of Meteorology](#)) and identify any potential inclement weather risks.
- Consider the general health of educators and children and location of first aid and medical assistance when planning experiences.
- Look out for
 - Signs of an approaching storm such as dark sky, high winds, thunder, and lightning.
 - Tree debris that might pose a slip or trip hazard, such as leaves, nuts and branches.
 - Damaged tree limbs and branches that may fall.
 - Wet floors, cement, and stairs.
 - Educators or children having trouble breathing triggered by smoke, dust, thunderstorms, or panic.
- Use their professional judgement to determine if outdoor play in shaded areas is safe- as a rule, up to 36°C children will have opportunities to play in areas covered by shade.
- Modify routines so that physical activity opportunities are offered during cooler parts of the day.
- Avoid being under trees after prolonged hot weather or heavy winds/rain that can affect stability of trees.
- Use professional judgement during days of high humidity to determine the period children and staff spend outside during those times.
- Ensure educators and children are encouraged to have breaks from outside play on hot and humid days.
- Remain indoors or under the veranda with the outdoor blinds fully closed and preschool doors open to allow air-conditioning to cool the area when the temperature **exceeds 36°C**.
- Touch test metal climbing equipment and other surfaces (eg pavers) which may get hot on days where the forecast temperature exceeds 30°C / UV 9 or above (if an adult can hold their hand on a surface for a slow count to 10, the surface is deemed safe to use)
- Contact parents if air conditioning malfunctions or is struggling or forecast temperature exceeds 35° so parents can determine whether to collect children early.
- Encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day, hourly on hot days.
- Discuss basic physical signs of heat stress with children to support children's understanding of their own body's responses to heat, for example "Your cheeks look red", "You're hot, it's time to slow down, go inside and get a drink of water".
- Ensure hats are worn and sunscreen re applied during the day (see Sun Protection Policy)
- Offer indoor and outdoor experiences which include water for its cooling effects on hot and humid days.