



Hot Weather and Heat Stress Policy

Policy

This policy applies all year 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:

- Staff will use their professional judgement however, as a general rule, when it is hot and up to 36°C children will play in areas covered by shade.
- When the temperature exceeds 36°C children and staff will remain inside or under the verandah with the outdoor blinds fully closed and preschool doors open to allow air-conditioning to cool the area.
- On days where the forecast temperature exceeds 34°C before children play in areas with metal climbing equipment and other surfaces which may get hot, staff will conduct a touch test to ensure surfaces are safe for children to use. (if an adult can hold their hand on a surface for a slow count to 10, the surface is deemed safe to use)
- Generally our air-conditioning works well however, in the event of an air-conditioning malfunction or on a day where the air-conditioning is struggling and/or temperatures exceed 35°C, families will be contacted and provided with the option of collecting their children early.
- Children are always encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day however; on hot days where the temperatures exceed 35°C their water intake will be monitored more closely.
- Staff will 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". Staff will use their professional judgement during days of high humidity and this may influence the period of time children and staff spend outside during those times.
- Staff and children are encouraged to have breaks from outside play on hot and humid days.
- Hats and sunscreen must be worn to protect from the heat of the sun (see Sun Protection Policy)
- On hot and humid days, many indoor and outdoor experiences will include water for its cooling effects.
- Parents should include a small ice brick when packing lunch and snack during hot weather.