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## PEK-P02: HOT WEATHER POLICY

### 1. Background Information

All employees must take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace. Port Elliot Kindergarten will provide a comfortable and safe environment for staff, families and children. It is imperative that we reduce the risk of heat related illness to young children during hot weather.

This policy recognises that children are at greater risk of suffering from heat illness than adults. A child's ability to respond to environmental heat and acclimatise to heat is due to physiological differences.

### 2. Purpose

To reduce the risk of heat related illness in young children at the Kindergarten. The risk of heat stress is a factor of both air temperature and relative humidity levels. Parents/guardians and caregivers delivering and collecting children must also be provided with an environment which minimises the risk of heat related illness.

### 3. Implementation & Management

The Kindergarten has air conditioning units that service all indoor areas. During hot weather these will be turned on when staff arrive and room temperatures will be maintained throughout the day to be between 21 to 25 degrees Celsius. Adjustments will be made accordingly to maintain this temperature range indoors.

The following strategies will assist to maintain children's comfort and ensure they are not heat stressed in hot weather:

- a. During hot weather children will be encouraged to play in shaded areas. In extreme heat, activities will be transferred inside and participation in quiet experiences will be encouraged.
- b. Children will be reminded to drink water either from their own drink bottles or from the Kindergarten water container. Drinking water is to be accessible to children at all times.

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- c. Parents will be encouraged to dress children in clothing that minimises heatgain, in layers that can be easily removed during activity and of a type that is sunsafe.
  - d. Parents will be encouraged to pack food in insulated containers with a freezer brick or frozen water. It is recommended that lunches in plastic boxes be placed in the fridge.
  - e. The rubber play surface under the swings will be assessed by a staff member on very hot days to determine whether it is safe for children to use. The slippery dip and metal surfaces will also be checked to ensure children do not access them when they are hot enough to place children at risk of burn injuries.
  - f. Contingency plans will be developed to manage events which affect normal functioning during hot weather, such as blackouts and breakdown of cooling or ventilation systems (e.g. contact school and request use of their facilities).
  - g. This policy works in conjunction with our Skin Protection policy (PEK-P001).
  - h. Staff will monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of site hot weather policies during the summer and provide feedback to Governing Council if changes need to be made.

#### 4. References & Useful Links

- DECD Hot Weather Guidelines for Preschools 2009 ID 6624/10
- Cancer Council SA -SunSmart Early Childhood Program
- DECS OHS&W - Heat Stress
- Sports Medicine Australia - Beat the Heat Brochure
- Le Fevre Kindergarten Sun Protection Policy Statement