

QA2 – EXTREME WEATHER EVENT (HEAT) & PREVENTION OF HEAT STRESS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION

Extreme heat weather is unexpected severe heat, that generally, but not always, occurs during summer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All team members, visitors, students and volunteers must comply with this procedure.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF EXTREME HEAT

When there is an extreme heat weather event, take practical precautions to reduce the impact it may have on team members and children. Consider:

- Spending time in air conditioning, or under fans.
- Staying inside and out of direct sunlight and heat – keep the children inside.
- Avoiding activities where too much energy is exerted.
- Encouraging children to drink more water than they usually would.
- Enjoying cool treats and snacks.
- Using fans and spray bottles to cool children and team members.

To prepare for the hotter days, consider:

- Closing doors and windows when using the air conditioning to avoid overworking the system.
- Keeping the air conditioning unit set at the recommended temperature of 24 degrees.
- Closing curtains, blinds and awnings at the start of the day to keep the sun out where possible.
- Checking the fridges, freezers, fans and air-conditioners are working correctly in the morning.

HEAT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Heat illness and stress can occur when a person is exposed to extreme heat and can be detrimental to their health. Types of heat illness and the symptoms associated with them include:

- Mild heat illness/ discomfort - flushed skin, increased sweating, heat rashes (prickly heat), feeling tired, weak or dizzy, cramps, reduced work / learning capacity, reduced attention span, irritability
- Heat exhaustion - fainting, headache, low blood pressure, nausea, clammy, pale or flushed skin, normal to high body temperature (up to 39C).
- Heat stroke - irritability, confusion, speech problems, hot dry skin, convulsions, unconsciousness, body temperature above 40C, cardiac arrest - potentially fatal.

The following steps should be taken to prevent heat stress and heat-related illness:

- Ensure there is always cool drinking water accessible.
- Drink water at frequent intervals to reduce fluid loss and maintain hydration.
- Ensure all team members and children are wearing breathable, loose clothing.
- Have frequent rest breaks in a cool place.
- Stay indoors.

If someone appears to be suffering from a heat illness, keep them inside in the air-conditioning and encourage them to drink cool but not cold fluids. Seek immediate first aid from the first aid officer and follow appropriate first aid steps.

PLEASE NOTE

In the event of power shedding or power outages, the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person will complete a risk assessment before making a decision to remain open or close.

- If the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person decides to close the Centre, all families will be notified of the closure and will be requested to collect their child as soon as possible.
- Refer to the Sun Safety Procedure for direction and advice about ongoing, regular sun safety practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Bureau of Meteorology. 2018. Ultraviolet (UV) index forecast. Available at:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/uv/index.shtml>

Cancer Council Australia. 2018. Sun protection. Available at: <https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/preventing-skin-cancer/>

Cancer Council Queensland. 2015. Early childhood settings: Sun smart policy guidelines. Available at: <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sunprotection/sunsmart-schools/>

City of Sydney. 2018. Preparing for a heatwave. Available at:

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/health-and-safety/prepare-emergencies/emergency-advice/heatwaves>

Health.Vic. 2018. Extreme heat - community resources. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heatwave-community-resources>

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Document Review Date
June 2019	Created new policy document and format.	June 2021