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## LOCAL 03: INCLEMENT 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 adverse effects to young children during inclement weather conditions. **Inclement weather** is abnormal climatic weather conditions: e.g., heat, cold, rain, hail, wind, fog that prevents children and staff undertaking their normal outdoor activities safely.

### 2. Purpose

To reduce the risk of hazards created in the event of inclement weather for children, staff and families at the Kindergarten. Hazards may include tree debris such as leaves, nuts and branches that might pose a slip or trip hazard; damaged tree limbs and branches that may fall; wet floors and pathways. 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 adverse effects from inclement 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.

### 3. Implementation & Management

The nominated supervisor is to monitor and be informed of daily weather forecasts and bushfire risk to identify any potential inclement weather risks.

The following strategies will assist to maintain children's safety and comfort ensuring that they are not adversely affected in inclement weather:

- 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.
- Air conditioning services are installed and routinely serviced in all indoor areas. During extreme outside temperatures, indoor room temperatures will be maintained between 21 to 25 degrees Celsius and children will be strongly encouraged to play **inside only**, at times of extreme heat, cold, winds, hail, etc (as determined by the nominated supervisor).

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- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to pack food in insulated containers with a freezer brick or frozen water. On days where the temperature is forecast to be above 35 degrees Celsius, children's bags containing food and water will be stored inside where the temperature will not affect them adversely. Fresh drinking water is accessible to children at all times and they will be reminded to drink regularly during hot weather to maintain hydration levels.
  - Parents and caregivers are encouraged to dress children in clothing that is in layers and that can be easily added to or removed during activity, is sunsafe and is made from material that minimises heat gain; such as a t-shirt with long or short sleeves with a collar and warmer top layers when necessary.
  - Wet weather may increase risk of slips and falls from nature playground surfaces. Rain affected surfaces may be deemed 'out of bounds' by the nominated supervisor for climbing at these times.
  - Children may be permitted outdoors at times, in rainy weather while wearing appropriate clothing such as rain coats, pants, boots and hats, to keep clothes dry.
  - Surfaces such as slides and swings will be checked so as to be deemed safe for use in hot weather.
  - Items may be removed/put away from outside area if the nominated supervisor decides that they may pose any risk to children's, staff or families' safety during high winds.
  - Children will be advised verbally when extra care needs to be taken due to adverse weather conditions. Risk assessments are conducted regularly with the children and an 'agreement' is formulated together with staff, regarding appropriate behaviour during inclement weather conditions.
  - Contingency plans will be developed to manage events which affect normal functioning during inclement and hot weather; such as blackouts and breakdown of cooling or ventilation systems (e.g. contact school and request use of their facilities).

This policy works in conjunction with our Skin Protection policy (PEK-P001).

Staff will monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of site inclement and hot weather policies and provide feedback to Governing Council if changes need to be made.

#### 4. References & Useful Links

- <https://edi.sa.edu.au/hr/for-managers/health-and-safety/creating-a-safe-workplace/inclement-weather-and-sun-protection>
- Cancer Council SA –SunSmart Early Childhood Program
- PEK-P02 Hot Weather Policy