



## Inclement Weather Policy & Procedure (appendix)

**Department Policy Reference:** Please note, this policy and procedure appendix must be read in conjunction with and compliments the Department's inclement weather and sun protection, and related policies and documents, and should be referenced collectively.

### **Purpose**

To ensure a safe learning and work environment for children, staff and families.

### **Implementation**

Leadership or the nominated supervisor will monitor daily weather forecasts (e.g. via the Bureau of Meteorology) and identify any potential inclement weather risks. 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
- ❖ Flooding

At South Port Kindergarten inclement weather is likely to be extreme high temperatures, high UV levels (8 and above), rain, strong winds and storms (including dust).

### **During and following a period of inclement weather, staff will:**

Consider:

- The health and safety risks to staff, children and families before allowing them to undertake outdoor activities.

Look out for:

- Signs of an approaching storm such as dark sky, high winds, thunder and lightning.
- 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 stairs.
- Staff or children having trouble breathing triggered by dust, thunderstorms or panic.

Monitor:

- Severe weather danger warnings and updates - Bureau of Meteorology national warnings.

### **During hot weather:**

Arrange:

- Work or learning tasks to maximise time in the shade or, if possible, relocate indoors.
- Start, end and break times to maximise activity time in the cooler parts of the day.
- Drinking water supply to keep hydrated.

Look out for:

- Signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.

Avoid:

- Sitting under trees during prolonged hot weather as heat stress can cause branches and limbs to break – eucalypts are especially dangerous during hot weather as they will shed healthy branches or limbs to preserve water in the rest of the tree.

Monitor:

- South Australia Country Fire Service fire danger ratings.
- For hot weather followed by heavy rain or wind that can affect the stability of trees.

The kindergarten will remain open for normal session times during hot weather as our building is air conditioned but for how long we can safely play and work in the outdoor environment will be determined by the air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and dust.

**To reduce the risks of any heat illness for children during hot weather, staff will:**

- Implement the sites Sun Smart Policy and Procedure.
- Intentionally teach children about and embed sun-safe practices.
- Provide access to clean, drinking water at all times and ensure children's drink bottles are refilled as necessary. A named cup will be provided in the absence of a drink bottle.
- Promote the drinking of water and monitor intake to support good hydration levels.
- Outdoor activities will be restricted to shaded areas and physical exercise will be limited.
- Pack away heat attracting equipment (such as metal climbing frames).
- Provide opportunities for water play, where possible.
- Schedule cool restful periods throughout the day.
- Encourage families to pack food in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack to keep food cool.  
Food is stored inside a cool, air-conditioned building (in children's lockers).
- Support children to apply and reapply sunscreen throughout the day, as required.

**To reduce the risks of heat illness for staff, volunteers and families during hot weather, staff will:**

- Have access to clean, drinking water at all times.
- Monitor their water intake and keep well hydrated.
- Manage outside pack up so that equipment is not packed away during the hottest part of the day. Leadership or the nominated supervisor will check in regularly with staff to discuss and assess their health and wellbeing. Staff can take cool down breaks if needed.

**Wind, Storm or Hail**

- During periods of extreme wind, storm or hail, children will be restricted to indoor play only.

- The doors to the outdoor learning environment will be closed, if required due to a health and safety threat. A 'wind weather warning' sign will be displayed as a visual for children.

### **Dust Storms**

*Dust storms are caused when strong, turbulent winds greater than about 30 km per hour, carry fine particles of dust from the surrounding area. Dust storms are short-term events that often occur after periods of intense surface heating (for example, drought or fire) over cleared land or during a cold front. Research shows that during dust storms, visits to the emergency department for respiratory and heart-related problems increase above the norm*

*While all people may feel discomfort, people with pre-existing illnesses such as respiratory or heart-related problems may have their existing symptoms aggravated. SA Health identifies the following as most at risk;*

- *Infants and children*
- *Elderly*
- *People with asthma, bronchitis and emphysema*
- *People with heart (cardiovascular) disease and other heart related conditions*
- *People with diabetes*

### **To reduce the risks of dust related illness for staff, children and families during a dust storm, staff will:**

- Consult with parents/caregivers of children with identified illnesses prior to the start of the kindergarten session, and collaboratively assess and manage any potential risks.
- Stay inside with closed windows, doors and vents.
- Avoid exercise, especially outdoors, to reduce the intake of particles into the lungs.
- Follow health action plan for children with asthma or other health conditions.

### **Rain and cold weather**

- Protective clothing, such as raincoats, onesies and rubber boots are to be worn when it is raining.
- Families are encouraged to provide weather appropriate clothing for children so they can access the outdoor learning environment all year-round (weather permitting).
- Families are encouraged to pack change of clothes.

### **Related Reference Documents:**

South Port Kindergarten Sun Smart Policy and Procedure

SA Health – Dust Storms

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/dust+storms>

National Quality Standard and Regulations:

- National Quality Standard - Standard 2.3 Children's Health and Safety.
- Regulation 114 – Outdoor Space - Shade

If you require further information regarding any of our policies, go to

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/hot-weather-policy>

### **Sources:**

Department for Education related policies and procedures as listed above  
South Port Kindergarten children (children's voice/consultation where appropriate)

South Port Kindergarten families and community users

South Port Kindergarten qualified teachers and educators / staff team

South Port Kindergarten Governing Council

**Approved by Governing Council: 07/12/2022**  
**Chairperson: Louise Mallabar**

**Approved by Director: Marissa Neeb**

***Next review date: December 2023***