HOT WEATHER POLICY

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. “Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults. In warm and hot weather they have greater difficulty getting rid of heat; they look flushed, and feel hotter and more stressed than adults”.
Source “Sports Medicine Australia”

Crucial to this policy is:
All employees, including leaders, must take reasonable care to protect their own health and safely and that of others in the preschool.
All employees ensure strategies are in place to reduce the risk of heat illness or burn injuries. Staff are to be given the opportunity to have a break from outside duties’ on hot days to relieve heat stress. The onus is on the staff member to request a break.

At Waikerie Children’s Centre we aim to keep everyone safe at all times and, in particular, during periods of hot weather. Reasonable steps will be taken to identify and manage risks, and every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and hazards.

We will:
Provide a comfortable and safe environment for all children.
Provide heating and cooling to maintain a comfortable temperature for all children.
Seek sun protection advice from the Cancer Council of South Australia.
Recognise the risk of heat stress is a factor of both air temperature and relative humidity levels.
During hot weather, check all surfaces in the preschool ensuring children are not at risk of contact burn injuries.

Strategies to reduce the risk of heat illness will include:
Shade: During periods of hot weather activities will be conducted in shaded areas.

Drinks: Children will be required to bring a drink bottle containing water and children will be reminded to drink regularly. Staff will top up children’s water bottles with filtered water as necessary.

Clothing: Parents are encouraged to dress children in clothing that minimises heat gain, in layers that can be easily removed during activity and in clothing that fits with our Sun Protection Policy.
Food: Parents are encouraged to pack food in insulated containers with a freezer brick or frozen water. The centre will provide a cool place to store food.

The following measures will apply on days when the UV radiation levels are high and when educators feel conditions warrant it:

Modified outdoor activities will be offered to children in the morning. These will be located in shaded areas.
There will be no outdoor activities offered in the afternoon and children will remain indoors.

As our preschool has effective cooling we do not have an Early Dismissal Clause.

If power supply to the centre is affected causing a power outage, parents will be called to collect their children to minimise the stress of heat related exposure.

For additional information please refer also to our Sun Protection Policy.

References
Sports Medicine Australia
DECD Guidelines for Developing a Preschool Hot Weather Policy

National Quality Standards - Standard 2.3.2 Children’s Health and Safety

SOURCED FROM:
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