



EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

Best Practise – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy will outline the procedures that will ensure the health and safety of all children and staff when weather conditions become extreme during a session at Stables Kindergarten.

The policy will also provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations in extreme weather conditions.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Stables Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in sessions
- accessing appropriate resources to enable well-informed decisions to be made regarding weather conditions
- facilitating effective and timely communication to parents and guardians regarding weather conditions, cancellation of sessions or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather conditions

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Stables Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Stables Kindergarten is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing the children to experience nature and its elements across seasons.

Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring, and learning in a natural environment. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff at risk. This policy provides parameters within which the kindergarten can make determinations to cancel session/s in response to forecast extreme weather conditions and ensure appropriate communication channels are in place to inform families. It also provides a framework for staff in the event that extreme weather conditions arise during session.

4. DEFINITIONS

Bureau of Meteorology: Australia's national weather, climate and water agency.

Website: www.bom.gov.au

Extreme Weather: weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

Service policies

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- An extreme weather policy which provides guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellations of a session and provides guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during session.
- All families being aware of this policy and are provided access to the policy upon request
- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website
- Monitoring events as dictated by the VicEmergency App
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to families in the event of cancelling a session in response to extreme weather conditions e.g.: families contacted by phone or the kindergarten app.
- Ensuring that on high wind days, children and staff are to remain inside

The Nominated Supervisor/Persons in Day-to-Day Charge and all other staff are responsible for:

Undertaking the following actions in the event of extreme weather conditions listed in the table below:

Weather Condition	Staff Actions
Heat <i>Risks include: sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (see Attachment 1 for symptoms and treatments)• Offer water for hydration at regular intervals• Establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade• Ensure application of sunscreen• Ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats• Children and staff are to remain indoors should the temperature reach 33 degrees Celsius or there are extreme hot winds in the area.

	<p>Outdoor Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict to short period of play • Educators are to apply sunscreen a minimum of half an hour • Offer in the morning only • Educators to check surfaces of play equipment to ensure it does not burn the children
<p>Rain – Hail – Cold</p> <p><i>Risks include: child getting wet (and onset hypothermia), injury from hailstones</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer indoor program only • Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary • Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves, scarves, etc. • Staff and children to re-enter building immediately if hail commences
<p>Electrical storm activity/lightning</p> <p><i>Risks include: lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer indoor program only • Move children away from trees • Children and staff to re-enter building immediately if there is any electrical storm activity • See Attachment 2 for Lightning Safety Fact Sheet
<p>High Winds</p> <p><i>Risks include: falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand/dirt) into eyes, other objects carried by high winds</i></p> <p><i>During Grass Pollen Season: early Spring to late Autumn be mindful of the effects this may have to asthmatics and sufferers of hay fever</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer indoor program only • Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure • Move children away from trees • Using staff discretion: children and staff are to re-enter the building

- In the event of illness or injury during a session because of extreme weather conditions, the Incident, Illness, Injury and Trauma Policy must be followed.
- Contacting the families if a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Illness, Injury and Trauma Policy.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Exercising their judgement and consider the level of heat related risk posed to their child during transportation to and from the kindergarten
- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their children are attending kindergarten. If for whatever reason families feel concerned for the wellbeing of their child due to weather conditions, they should consider withholding their child from the session and collect their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session
- Ensuring appropriate clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided. Dressing children in items that are easily removed should they become hot
- Parents are to pack snacks/lunches in insulated bags, preferably with an ice brick to keep it cool
- Ensure they carry a mobile phone with them or can be contactable always whilst their child attends kindergarten
- Reading and becoming familiar with this policy
- Ensuring they have downloaded the Stables Kindergarten App
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of staff, manager or committee of management

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments

Attachment 2: Lightning Action Guide and First Aid Guidelines

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Stables Kindergarten on 26th April 2021.

REVIEW DATE: 26/04/2024

ATTACHMENT 1

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke - Symptoms and Treatment

Heat exhaustion is a serious condition that can develop into heat stroke.

The most common signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Confusion
- Dark-colored urine (a sign of dehydration)
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Pale skin
- Profuse sweating
- Rapid heartbeat

What to do for Heat Exhaustion

If you, or anyone else, has symptoms of heat exhaustion, it's essential to immediately get out of the heat and rest, preferably in an air-conditioned room. If you can't get inside, try to find the nearest cool and shady place.

Other recommended strategies include:

- Drink plenty of fluid (avoid caffeine and alcohol).
- Remove any tight or unnecessary clothing.
- Apply other cooling measures such as fans or ice towels.

If such measures fail to provide relief within 30 minutes, contact a doctor because untreated heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. It occurs when the body is unable to prevent the temperature rising rapidly.

The symptoms may be the same for heat exhaustion, but the skin may be dry with no sweating, and the person's mental condition worsens. They may stagger, appear confused, have a fit or collapse and become unconscious.

What to do for Heat Stroke

- Call an ambulance
- Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
- Remove clothing and wet skin with water, fanning continuously
- Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway

ATTACHMENT 2

Lightning Action Guide and First Aid Guidelines

Lightning Action Guide

BE PREPARED

- Check with your local electrical contractor for advice on surge protectors and lightning conductors
- Have an emergency kit on hand, including a battery-operated radio, torch and spare batteries
- Keep a list of emergency numbers handy

ACT SAFE

If caught outdoors:

- Seek shelter in a hard-top vehicle or solid building. Never shelter under a tree or a group of trees
- If far from shelter crouch down, don't lie flat
- If boating or swimming, leave the water immediately
- Avoid metal objects such as ladders, umbrellas, fences, and clothes lines
- Secure pets in a safe place

If indoors:

- Disconnect computers, televisions, and other electrical/electronic appliances
- Avoid using fixed line telephones unless essential
- Keep clear of windows
- Avoid metal fixtures, such as roofs, guttering, downpipes and taps

AFTER THE LIGHTNING

- Keep your radio tuned to local media for updated weather reports and power outages
- Confirm location and safety of family members and immediate neighbours
- Check operation of essential household items and check fuse box for surge protection/fuse/circuit breaker impact

For further information contact your local State Emergency Service office

Source:

Emergency Management Australia: www.ema.gov.au

First Aid Recommendations for Lightning Victims

Giving first aid to lightning strike victims while waiting for professional medical attention can save their lives. It is safe to touch a lightning strike victim. People struck by lightning DO NOT carry a charge.

Follow these four steps immediately to help save the life of a lightning strike victim:

1. **Call for Help**

Call 000 immediately. Give directions to your location and information about the strike victim(s). It is safe to use a mobile phone during a storm.

2. **Assess the Situation**

Safety is a priority. Be aware of the continuing lightning danger to both the victim and rescuer. If the area where the victim is located is high risk (e.g., an isolated tree or open field), the victim and rescuer could both be in danger. If necessary, move the victim to a safer location. It is unusual for a victim who survives a strike to have any major broken bones that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless the person suffered a fall or was thrown a long distance. Therefore, it may be safe to move the victim to minimize possible further exposure to lightning.

3. **Respond**

Lightning often causes a heart attack. Check to see if the victim is breathing and has a heartbeat. The best place to check for a pulse is the carotid artery which is found on your neck directly below your jaw.

4. **Resuscitate**

If the victim is not breathing, immediately begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If the victim does not have a pulse, start cardiac compressions as well (CPR). Continue resuscitation efforts until help arrives. If the area is cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may help decrease hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature).

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Lightning may also cause other injuries such as burns, shock, and sometimes blunt trauma. Treat each of these injuries with basic first aid until help arrives. Do not move victims who are bleeding or appear to have broken bones