

Mawson Lakes Preschool – Policy Statement

Hot Weather Policy



“Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer rate in the world with two out of every three people developing some form of skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first ten years of life determines, to a substantial degree the likelihood of skin cancer developing in later life.”

Cancer Council SA

Mawson Lakes Preschool is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, families, children and visitors to our preschool. To achieve these aims the preschool has developed these guidelines regarding sun smart practices and hot weather.

Site Context

Outdoor area

Mawson Lakes Preschool has undergone significant work to upgrade our outdoor facilities in order to provide suitable, engaging and challenging learning spaces. Our outdoor area has a number of trees which provide shade as well as two large shade structures providing up to 98% UV-B block out – one over the swing area and one over our sandpit and water course area.

Verandah

Our building has a verandah erected along the entire length on the northern face of our building – the verandah also has blinds which provide further protection.

Air Conditioning

The preschool is fully air conditioned with reverse cycle ducted air conditioning and a number of subsidiary units in the main indoor play areas, kitchen and office.

Strategies for minimising heat related stress and UV exposure during hot weather

Activities

During hot weather outdoor learning activities will be modified when needed. Staff will monitor the placement of equipment/activities to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff (eg placing climbing equipment in the shade/moving equipment to follow the shade/using portable shade structures/restricting climbing activities to the AM session only). On days of extreme heat, staff will decide whether it is safe to play outside. On days of extreme heat the outdoor program may be modified or cancelled with children playing inside or on the verandah and parents/caregiver will be notified of the decision via the whiteboard.

Surfaces

Prior to children engaging in outdoor play on hot days, staff will check the surface temperature of items such as swings and climbing boards in order to prevent burn injuries. This will be checked by a staff member placing their hand on the surface for a slow count of five.

Hats and clothing

“Sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency. But there are times when it’s actually important to leave your hat and sunscreen off.” (Professor Brenda Wilson, CE of Cancer Council SA)

All children must wear a hat outside from the beginning of **September to the end of April** and will be encouraged to do so at other times of the year. A broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat is recommended (baseball style caps are not allowed as they do not provide appropriate sun protection). Hats are to be provided by parents/caregivers. Children not wearing a hat/inappropriate hat will be expected to play in the shade.

During May to August in South Australia, skin protection is not necessary for most people as UV radiation levels generally fall below 3. On a normal preschool day from May to August, when UV levels are below 3, the chance of skin damage from the sun for most people is low.

Parents will be encouraged to dress children in layers that can easily be removed during activity. Shirts with collars and longer sleeves eg to the elbow and longer style shorts/skirts will be encouraged. Singlets and shoe string strap tops are not allowed.

Sunscreen

From September to April the preschool will be responsible for supplying sunscreen for use at preschool (Broad spectrum, water resistant SPF30+). Parents/caregivers will be asked to complete a ‘permission to apply sunscreen’ form as part of the enrolment process. Staff will be responsible for supervising children to reapply sunscreen before outside play in the afternoon. Children will be encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under staff supervision and instruction. Staff will help children to apply sunscreen to children who are unable to do themselves. Parents/caregivers are responsible for applying sunscreen to their children before attending preschool. A broad spectrum water resistant SPF30+ is recommended. Parents/caregivers of children with sunscreen sensitivity will need to supply an appropriate alternative labelled with child’s name.

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Snacks and drinks during hot weather

Parents are encouraged to pack snacks in insulated containers with a freezer brick or frozen water. These are to be kept in children's bags and placed in a locker under the verandah. Lunch boxes containing children's lunches are to be put into the lunch crates on the verandah on arrival each morning. The crates will be brought inside by a staff member and lunch boxes transferred to the refrigerator.

Children will be reminded to have a drink regularly during the day and have free access to cool, fresh drinking water at all times. Children are expected to bring their own named drinking cup which is kept in their bag. If a child forgets their cup, the preschool will provide one. Flasks and other drinking bottles are not required at preschool.

Staff, parents/caregivers, visitors and workers

The Director (or delegate) will ensure;

- All risks associated with working in inclement weather conditions are identified, assessed and control measures are implemented monitored and reviewed
- Appropriate planning is undertaken to ensure individuals are provided with appropriate resources to mitigate any unnecessary risks associated with performing activities in inclement weather conditions
- Individuals have access to appropriate levels of supervision, information, instruction and training so they are able to perform their duties and activities without risks to their health and safety
- First aid or medical treatment is provided to an individual who may be affected by stress as a result of performing activities in inclement weather conditions
- Reporting is completed on IRMS within 12 hours of exposure

Workers must ensure they:

- Use any PPE (personal protective equipment) that has been provided eg hats, sunscreen, sunglasses
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear suitable for the activity and the type of inclement weather conditions that are present eg long sleeves, trousers full enclosed non slip shoes
- Inform the site manager of any changes in climatic conditions while performing activities outdoors to ensure that appropriate control measures can be implemented, reviewed and monitored throughout the activity

Staff, volunteers, visitors and workers attending the site will be expected to wear sun protection and be responsible for supplying their own sun protection equipment.

In regards to staff, volunteers, visitors or workers attending the site, the Director (or delegate) shall decide whether it is safe to commence work in hot conditions. Preventative measures may be implemented. These include;

- rescheduling of work
- modify the rate at which work is performed
- alter location of work
- implement frequent work breaks
- provision of cool drinking water

If any person at the centre suffers from a heat related illness, (heat stress, heat exhaustion), they will be required to complete an ED155 form and this will be entered onto the IMS (Incident and Response Management System) website by the Director (or delegate).

References

Cancer Council SA

<http://www.cancersa.org.au/asp/sunsmart.aspx>

DECD Inclement Weather Procedure (2014)

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/policy/pages/OSPP/47427/>

National Quality Standard 2.3 (2011)

http://acecqa.gov.au/storage/2-DE_03_National%20Quality%20Standard_v8_Secn1.pdf

Work Health and Safety Act 2012

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Work%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Act%202012.aspx>

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/R/Work%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Regulations%202012.aspx>

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Developed and accepted by the staff of Mawson Lakes Preschool, and the Governing Council – 26th May 2008.

Reviewed and Updated October 2010, June 2012, June 2014

Review date: 2016