



ALL WEATHER PLAY POLICY

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

POLICY STATEMENT

Orchard Early Learning Centre operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing the children to experience nature and its elements across the seasons. The approach allows children to see, understand and experience seasonal changes and the different elements in nature. Children have deeper conversations around nature, demonstrating a greater sense of awe and curiosity, and a greater level of respect for nature, allowing for more meaningful learning opportunities around environmental issues and sustainability.

There is a myth that cold weather causes illness, however according to Harvard Medical School, it is viruses that cause illness and they tend to survive and replicate better in lower temperatures and lower humidity. People also tend to spend more time together indoors in the colder months allowing viruses to spread more easily in confined spaces.

Being outside in the fresh air, is the best way to minimise colds and viral diseases spreading. All sites visited endorsed all weather play (except in extreme weather conditions) and ensured children were dressed appropriately for the conditions.

GOALS/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

Orchard Early Learning Centres will provide the opportunity to play outside, throughout the year, in all different kinds of weather. Our service provide opportunity for children to engage in open-ended, diverse and meaningful learning experiences that are connected to nature, while also being connected to curriculum.

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

- Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a natural environment. However in extreme weather conditions the well-being and safety of the children, staff are paramount.
- Educators will always ensure children's comfort, safety, and protection from the elements. Our education team is aware of risks associated with harsh or dangerous weather in such circumstance's children will not be permitted to go outdoors
- Children will not be permitted outdoors in weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat.
- Children play outdoors at the discretion of the educators who take into account all weather conditions.
- A combination of sun protection measures will be used whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above (See Sun Safety Policy)
- Children will be clothed appropriately to match weather conditions and that a change of clothes is provided (including shoes.)
- Any excursion planned that incur extreme weather condition will be cancelled and rescheduled.





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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person / Educators responsibilities in severe weather:

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website
- Keep children indoors during severe weather
- In the event of weather becoming extreme during the day, Educators are responsible for undertaking the following actions in each of the weather conditions listed below:

Weather Conditions	Educator/Staff Actions
Heat Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke and dehydration.	<p>Monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke</p> <p>Offer water for hydration at regular intervals</p> <p>Establish activities indoors or in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade</p> <p>Ensure application of sunscreen every 2 hours.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate protective clothing, including hats</p>
Severe Rain/Hail/Cold Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia) Injury from hailstones	<p>Monitor children for wet clothes and change if necessary.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate wet weather clothing is worn.</p> <p>Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including gloves, scarves, beanies etc.</p> <p>Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail</p>
Electrical storm activity/Lightning Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike	<p>Move children away from trees</p> <p>Seek indoor or undercover shelter</p>





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High Winds Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand, dirt) into eyes.	Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure Move children away from trees Seek shelter indoors if necessary
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Review

- Management and staff regularly monitor and review how effectively they implement the All Weather policy.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

- Dressing their child in appropriate seasonal clothing;

In Summer:

Providing a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears (e.g., wide-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style). Clothing that covers shoulders, neck and as much of the skin as possible. Apply sunblock on arrival.

In Winter:

Provide warm jumpers or jackets, appropriate footwear, long pants, raincoat and or gumboots or wet weather jumpsuits.

In Rain:

Provide gumboots, raincoat or wet weather jumpsuits.

- Provide a change of clothes each day of care, including shoes and socks.

LINKS TO EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS, NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice – Standards 1.1, 1.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 3.1, 3.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Standards 4.1, 4.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standards 6.1, 6.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standards 7.1, 7.2





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SOURCES/RESOURCES / USEFUL LINKS

Resources and useful links

- SunSmart - www.sunsmart.com.au
- Cancer Council Australia - www.cancer.org.au
- <http://www.flightsowhimsy-ece.com/2013/07/outdoor-play-in-australia-why-has-it-become-such-a-challenge-to-early-childhood-educators/>
- <http://www.earlyyearscares.com/eyc/enabling-environment/accessing-outdoor-play-no-matter-weather/>
- <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/play-in-puddle>
- <https://longnow.org/ideas/02020/10/27/how-forest-floors-in-finlands-daycares-changed-childrens-immune-systems/>

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Cancer Council Sample Early Education and Care Sun Protection Policy: www.sunsmartnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SunSmart-Early-Childcare-Policy.pdf
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/preventing-seasonal-maladies>
- <https://www.theage.com.au/education/back-to-nature-children-reap-benefits-of-braving-the-cold-20190622-p520bj.html>

POLICY REVIEW

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Date(s) reviewed: April 2019 / April 2020 / January 2021 / February 2022

