

# Extreme Heat Policy



<b>Document Title</b>	NQS7.65 Extreme Heat Policy	<b>Version</b>	2a
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<b>Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.</b>			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 7 – Leadership & service management			

## 1. Policy Statement

Heat is a hazard in Australian workplaces. Heat poses a potential health risk to children and adults. This policy describes how this risk is minimised in our services.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the NQS2.21 Bush Fire Policy.

## 2. Rationale

Hot weather can affect a baby or child because their bodies cannot adjust to changes in temperature as efficiently as adults. Babies and children sweat less, reducing their bodies' ability to cool down, and they generate more heat during exercise than adults. They are at risk of overheating and developing a heat-related illness. Heat can also make existing illnesses worse. Working in heat can lead to workers suffering serious illness and also lead to increased accidents.

## 3. Definitions

**Extreme heat or heatwave** – Extreme heat or heatwave is a period of unusual and uncomfortable hot weather that could negatively affect human health. Extreme heat can also affect community infrastructure (such as power supply and public transport) and other services. Extreme heat can affect everyone, however some people are more vulnerable. Temperatures over 34°C has been identified as the Heat Health Threshold for Victoria above which heat related illness and death increases substantially. For the purpose of this policy, extreme heat is defined as temperatures over 34°C.

## 4. Guidelines

### a) Modifications to activities during extreme heat

#### **Keep hydrated**

Encourage and remind children and adults to drink water regularly, even if they do not feel thirsty. Older children often forget to drink because they are busy playing. Encourage older child to drink water regularly. Breastfed and bottle-fed babies less than six months of age will need to be fed more often in hot weather. Water or other drinks are not needed for babies under 6 months old unless recommended by a Doctor. Babies over six months of age can be offered small amounts of cooled boiled water, after or between milk feeds.

In hot weather, skin contact can be quite uncomfortable for a baby at feed times. A towel, sheet or a nappy may be used between the adult and the baby.

#### **Use fans or air conditioners to keep the environment cool.**

- Air conditioners should be set between 21-26°C.
- Fans should be used to increase air circulation.

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- For the Mobile service, in conditions where temperatures are expected to rise over 35°C, arrangements will be made with the venue representative to have air conditioning turned on prior to the Mobile service arriving at the venue.

### Reduce direct sunlight

Where possible use blinds or curtains to reduce direct sunlight and turn off lights.

### Limit vigorous physical activity

Limit vigorous physical activity to cooler parts of the day following SunSmart guidelines (see Physical Environment policy). Spend as much time as possible in cool or air conditioned buildings.

### Wear light cotton clothing

Follow SunSmart recommendations and wear light cotton clothing and a broad rimmed hat.

### Reduce pace of activity

Physically vigorous activity or activity which is outdoors i.e. packing of resources into Mobile truck or packing up playground) should be conducted at a slower pace.

Regular 5-minute breaks in cooler conditions should be taken during these activities and limited as defined below:

Temperature °C	Duration of outdoor physical activity without a break (e.g., packing truck, raking sandpit, packing shed)	Break length
0-32°C	1 hour	5 mins
34-36°C	40 mins	5 mins
36-38°C	30 mins	5 mins
38-40°C	20 mins	5 mins
40-43°C	10 mins	5 mins
43°C and over	5 mins	5 mins

In situations where high temperatures mean tasks cannot be completed within working hours, additional paid rest time will be provided. Educators will be paid for this accordingly.

### Job rotation / sharing

Where possible vigorous physical exertion will be rotated or shared between team members.

### b) Information sharing

Heat health messages will be shared via Storypark and Facebook by the Quality Coordinator with families in November, and throughout the summer. These include:

- Drink plenty of water- even if you don't feel thirsty. Take a bottle with you always
- Hot cars kill- never leave children, adults or pets in hot cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes
- Keep cool- seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use a fan, take cool showers and dress in light and loose clothing made from natural fabrics
- Plan ahead- schedule activities to the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat.

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- Take care of others- look after those most at risk in the heat.

### c) Travelling in extreme heat

Additional water bottles will always be carried in the truck (a minimum of 1L per educator)

Regular servicing and maintenance of the Mobile truck will be carried out to minimise risk of breakdown in heat.

The truck also has a satellite phone for emergency use. This will be added onto the DCC telephone list.

In situations of extreme heat a check-in system will be implemented. Educators will text the designated mobile number (GM / AM) when leaving the venue and the anticipated time of arrival at base. On arrival they will text again to report that they have arrived safely. If the Mobile truck does not arrive within 10 minutes of the expected arrival time, an organisation representative will be sent to retrieve the educators.

### d) Power outage in extreme heat conditions

Power outages will be reported to Electricity Provider Essential Energy 132080. Ensure that the fact that young children are being cared for at the address is emphasised.

Strategies such as closing doors and windows and closing window coverings will be implemented. Where possible children will be limited to quiet and non-vigorous activities and cool, wet cloths used to keep children cool.

Internal building temperatures will be monitored using thermometers in the service during power outages by the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible person.

If the internal building temperature rises above 37°C and remains 37°C or more for 1 hour, the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible person will contact the General Manager or Approved Provider to cancel the service for the day. Families will be contacted and asked to collect their children. Children will be kept cool and comfortable until their collection. The NSW Department of Education will be notified on 1800619113.

### e) Recognising the symptoms of heat stress in babies and children and what to do

Signs and Symptoms	What to do – First Aid
<b>Heat exhaustion</b>	
Looking unwell and more irritable than usual	if you think the baby or young child is suffering from heat exhaustion, seek medical advice.
Pale and clammy skin	Move to a cool area and remove all extra clothes
Sleepy and floppy	Try to give the baby or child drinks (unless unconscious and not able to swallow)
Fewer wet nappies than usual	A breastfed baby with heat exhaustion should be offered the breast as much as possible. Cool boiled water may be considered, particularly for babies over six months old or those already receiving other fluids
Dark urine (normal is light straw colour)	A bottle-fed baby with heat exhaustion should be offered an extra bottle and cool boiled water
Refusing to drink (babies may feel uncomfortable to have skin contact when breastfeeding – try a towel on skin)	An older child with heat exhaustion should be offered water or diluted fruit juice (1 part juice in 4 parts water)

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Signs and Symptoms	What to do – First Aid
<p>Intense thirst (but as the baby gets weaker, he/she may drink less)</p> <p>Dry skin, mouth and eyes (no tears when crying)</p> <p>Soft spot on baby's head (fontanelle) may be sunken or depressed</p>	<p>Cover the child or baby with cool damp cloths or sponge he/she down with water</p> <p>If symptoms worsen or if there is no improvement, seek urgent medical advice and call an ambulance if necessary</p>
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	
<p>All the signs of heat exhaustion as above plus:</p> <p>Rising body temperature</p> <p>Red, hot and dry skin</p> <p>Rapid breathing</p> <p>Vomiting</p> <p>Confusion</p> <p>Coma (not responding when touched or called)</p>	<p>Immediately call 000 and ask for an ambulance</p> <p>Move to a cool area and remove all extra clothes</p> <p>If the baby or child is conscious and able to drink, give small sips of cool fluids</p> <p>Bring their temperature down using any method available (sponging with cool water, cool bath, or covering with cool damp cloths)</p> <p>If unconscious, lay the child on their side (recovery position) and check they can breathe properly. For babies less than a year old, a different recovery position is needed. Cradle the infant in your arms with their head tilted downwards to make sure they do not choke on their tongue or vomit. Support their head with your hand</p> <p>Perform CPR if needed</p>

Where any of these symptoms are recognised and treated an Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma form must be completed.

### f) Recognising the symptoms of heat stress in adults and what to do

Signs and Symptoms	What to do – First Aid
<b>Dehydration</b>	
<p>Dizziness</p> <p>Tiredness</p> <p>Irritability</p> <p>Thirst</p> <p>Bright or dark yellow urine*</p> <p>Loss of appetite</p> <p>Fainting</p>	<p>Drink plenty of water 100-200mL at frequent intervals- avoid tea, coffee or alcohol</p> <p>Move somewhere cool, ideally somewhere air-conditioned</p> <p>If possible use a spray bottle with water in it to cool yourself down</p> <p>If you start to feel unwell, seek medical advice</p>
<b>Heat Cramps</b>	
<p>Muscle pains or spasms</p>	<p>Stop all activity and lie in a cool place, legs slightly raised</p> <p>Drink water</p> <p>Have a cool shower or bath</p> <p>Massage your limbs to ease spasms, apply cool packs</p>

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Signs and Symptoms	What to do – First Aid
	<p>Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside (exertion may lead to heat exhaustion/ heat stroke)</p> <p>Seek medical advice if there is no improvement</p>
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	
<p>Heavy sweating (cool and moist skin)</p> <p>Pale skin</p> <p>Fast and weak pulse rate</p> <p>Breathing fast and shallow</p> <p>Muscle weakness or cramps</p> <p>Tiredness</p> <p>Dizziness</p> <p>Headache</p> <p>Nausea or vomiting</p> <p>Fainting</p>	<p>Move to a cool place, if possible in an air-conditioned room and lie down</p> <p>Remove excess clothing</p> <p>Take small sips of cool fluids</p> <p>Cool shower, bath or sponge bath</p> <p>Put cool packs under armpits, on the groin, or on the back of the neck to reduce body heat</p> <p>If symptoms worsen or if there is no improvement, seek urgent medical advice and call an ambulance if necessary</p>
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	
<p>A sudden rise in body temperature</p> <p>Red, hot and dry skin (sweating has stopped)</p> <p>Dry swollen tongue</p> <p>Rapid pulse</p> <p>Rapid shallow breathing</p> <p>Intense thirst</p> <p>Headache</p> <p>Nausea or vomiting</p> <p>Dizziness</p> <p>Confusion, poor coordination or slurred speech</p> <p>Aggressive or bizarre behaviour</p> <p>Loss of consciousness</p> <p>Seizures or coma</p>	<p>Immediately call 000 and ask for an ambulance</p> <p>Get the person into the shade, lay them down, and keep them as still as possible</p> <p>Give small sips of cool fluids if conscious and able to drink</p> <p>Bring their temperature down using any method available (sponging with cool water, cool shower, spraying with cool water from the garden hose or soaking clothes with cool water)</p> <p>Put cool packs under armpits, on the groin, or on the back of the neck to reduce body heat</p> <p>Do not give aspirin or paracetamol; they do not help and may be harmful</p> <p>If unconscious, lay the person on their side (recovery position) and check they can breathe properly</p> <p>Perform CPR if needed</p>

Where any of these symptoms are recognised and treated an Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma form must be completed.

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### g) Extreme heat and the Mobile service

#### Cancellation of care

In rare situations the predicted temperature (by Bureau of Meteorology) may be expected to rise over 43°C. In these situations, the health and safety of children and adults in the Mobile service may be at risk due to non-purpose-built venues, and distance of travel for educators and for this reason care will be cancelled (see procedure below)

#### Excursion to childcare

In the event the Mobile service is cancelled, families will be given an option to utilise the mobile service at the preschool facilities (if available) in Deniliquin, as determined by Management in Deniliquin. If this option is utilised, all appropriate 'excursion' paperwork must be completed, and full mobile fees will apply if this option is utilised.

Alternatively, if any children are existing children of the childcare centre; administration will determine if there is a casual vacancy available for the child.

Mobile team members will complete their rostered hours in another service of River Region Early Education or complete allocated office duties as negotiated between the Nominated Supervisor and the General Manager. This may include learning documentation, filing, study for trainees.

#### In the event care is provided and the temperature reaches greater than 43°

In the event the temperature reaches greater than the forecast temperature and above 43°, the Nominated Supervisor will contact families and request that their child/children are collected as soon as possible (see procedure below)

## 5. Procedure

### a) Cancellation of Mobile service due to extreme heat before service commences

1. Bureau of Meteorology forecast for the following day in Deniliquin will be checked by the Mobile team at 3.30pm (<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/riverina.shtml>)
2. If the daytime temperature expected maximum is 43° or above, the General Manager will be contacted by the Mobile service to cancel care for the following day
3. An email and a text message will be sent by the admin staff to all families informing them of the decision to cancel care as directed by the General Manager.

*"Mobile childcare and preschool at \_\_\_\_\_ venue has been cancelled for \_\_\_\_\_ (day) the \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for health and safety reasons of the children and educators as the BOM forecast maximum temperature for tomorrow is above 43°C. Families may utilise the mobile service in X venue in Deniliquin and charged mobile fees; or make alternative arrangements for care for this day and NOT CHARGED FEES. We apologise for any inconvenience."*

4. The NSW Department of Education will be notified via 1800 619 113.

### b) Cancellation of Mobile service due to extreme heat during service

1. Educators will monitor the temperature through the day using the <http://www.bom.gov.au/places/nsw>
2. If the temperature reaches 43°, the Nominated Supervisor will contact families and request that their child/children are collected within one hour (same timeframe as the Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma policy).
3. If the family is unable to collect the child within one hour, the emergency contact will be contacted and asked to collect the child.

## 6. Resources and references

- NSW Health How to stay healthy in the Heat- <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/heat-related-illness.aspx>
- Vic Health- Heat Health Alerts
- <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heat-health-alerts>
- NSW Department of Education- Supporting students in Hot Weather <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/health-and-physical-care/hot-weather>
- Safe Work Australia- Guide for managing the risks of working in heat <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risks-working-heat>

## 7. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

<b>Legislation</b>	
<b>Education and Care Services National Regulation</b>	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
114	Outdoor space - shade
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
<b>National Quality Standards</b>	
2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
<b>Child Safe Standards</b>	
1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes</b>	
3	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Principles</b>	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Practices</b>	

## 8. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS7.65 A1	Extreme Heat Risk Assessment
NQS7.65 A2	Internal Temperature Monitoring Chart

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS3.20	Physical Environment Policy
NQS2.21	Bush Fire Policy
NQS2.11	Incident, Injury, Illness & Trauma Policy

## 9. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS7.65	Extreme Heat Policy	1	October 2019	October 2021
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