



Lock Early Learning Centre

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LOCK EARLY LEARNING CENTRE HOT WEATHER POLICY

Lock Early Learning Centre is located in a rural area of South Australia that frequently experiences extreme heat in the summer months. It is recognised that the risk of heat stress is influenced by both air temperature and relative humidity and where our heat is usually hot and dry humidity is a recognised factor.

The Lock Early Learning Centre is of prefabrication and cladding construction, north/south facing with large verandas on the south of the building. It is serviced by five split system air conditioners and one large refrigerated air conditioner.

Young children are at a 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". (*Sports Medicine Australia*)

We will reduce the risk of heat illness to young children during hot weather by:

- Providing adequate **shade** for children in hot weather with activities conducted inside or in shaded areas.
- Children will be frequently offered **water or fluids**, with fresh water provided on tap.
- Ensuring activities are **held indoors** when air temperature levels increase, with activities held outdoors before 10am on days of extreme temperature.
- Activities provided will encourage **heat reduction** such as water play, and experiences that discourage intense activity.
- Lock Early Learning Centre complies with the recommendations of the Cancer council of SA.
- **Excursions** will not be conducted on days of extreme heat.
- Parents are encouraged to **dress** children in appropriate sun protective clothing—no singlet or midriff tops are allowed, that **minimises heat gain**, and can be easily removed by the child or carer when required. Including inappropriate hat.
- Parents are encouraged to pack **food** in an insulated lunch box with a freezer pack or frozen drink. Families and children are encouraged to store food (particularly meat and dairy products) in the refrigerator provided at anytime.
- In extenuating circumstances (such as air conditioning failure due to power loss or **breakdown of cooling** or ventilation systems) parents may be contacted to collect children when the forecast is at least 36 degrees Celsius. Staff will remain on duty to care for children who are unable to be collected.
- **Staff** will ensure that on days of extreme heat children are kept as comfortable as possible.

Lock Early Learning Centre is considered a high risk site for bush fires category 2. Our site's **bush fire action plan**, states that school buses will not travel on catastrophic fire danger days and the centre will close. The bush fire safe haven is within Lock Area School where we will stay until directed otherwise

Governing council endorsement:

Issue date: 2014
Review date: 2016

SunSmart Early Childhood Program

The policy is in place from the beginning of September until the end of April in South Australia and when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 and above, at other times.

Babies (under the age of 12 months) should be kept out of the direct sunlight as much as possible and always protected by shade, clothing and hats. Sunscreen should be applied to small areas of exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats, where necessary.

Staff to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities as much as possible.

Care is taken during the peak UVR times and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times where possible.

Children who do not have appropriate hats with them are asked to play in an area protected from the sun.

Staff to act as positive role models by routinely practising SunSmart behaviours including wearing appropriate hats and clothing when outdoors.

SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is applied 15–20 minutes before going outside and reapplied regularly (around two hourly or sooner if involved in water activities).

Age appropriate information on skin protection is included in children's programming.

SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole community (e.g. via newsletters) and all new families and staff members are informed of the policy.

The service has sufficient shade or is working towards increasing the number of trees and shade structures so as to provide adequate sun protected areas.



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development