

Y Whittlesea

Extreme Weather Policy (Early Years)

1. Policy statement

This policy provides guidance to ensure:

- All staff are familiar with the requirements for managing extreme weather conditions.
- Children are kept safe and comfortable during extreme heat, cold, storms, or poor air quality days.
- Decisions about outdoor play and excursions consider children's health, wellbeing, and safety.
- Centres comply with relevant regulations and health recommendations regarding extreme weather in Victoria.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all children, families, staff, management, and visitors of Early Learning and Sessional Kindergarten Centres. This includes volunteers, students on placement, and contractors or labour hire employees.

3. Policy

Y Whittlesea is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children by actively managing the risks associated with extreme weather conditions. In line with the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and National Regulations 2011, all staff are required to take reasonable steps to protect children from harm, including weather-related hazards.

Extreme weather—such as high heat, severe cold, storms, and poor air quality—can pose serious health risks to children, including heat stress, dehydration, sunburn, hypothermia, and respiratory complications. Children are particularly vulnerable due to their developing bodies and higher sensitivity to environmental conditions.

Educators must monitor weather forecasts, UV ratings, and air quality indexes daily and adjust routines to minimise exposure. This includes modifying or cancelling outdoor play, using shaded or indoor areas, and maintaining hydration and sun safety practices.

Effective communication with families is essential to ensure consistent care and shared responsibility during extreme weather. All staff must also follow safe manual handling practices when relocating equipment to adapt to changing conditions.

4. Responsibilities

Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider

- Ensure current policies and procedures for extreme weather are in place and followed.
- Provide training to staff on weather safety, including sun protection & managing heat/cold stress.
- Maintain shaded outdoor areas and ensure heating and cooling systems are working effectively.
- Provide educators with access to accurate, up-to-date weather and air quality information.
- Support educators in adjusting the daily program in response to extreme weather conditions.
- Communicate with families about the service's extreme weather practices and expectations (e.g. clothing, hydration).
- Review and update this policy annually or after any significant weather-related incident.

Educators and Staff

- Check weather forecasts, UV ratings, and air quality alerts daily (e.g. BOM, SunSmart app, EPA Victoria).
- Monitor changes throughout the day and adjust routines as needed.
- Modify or cancel outdoor activities based on weather conditions:
 - Move play indoors during high heat (above 36°C) or extreme UV.
 - Limit outdoor time when temperatures drop below 10°C.
 - Cease outdoor activities during storms, lightning, or strong winds.
 - Keep children indoors and use air conditioning on poor air quality days.

- Ensure children wear hats and sunscreen when UV is 3 or above.
- Encourage and role model regular water drinking.
- Notify families of changes to the program due to weather conditions.
- Document program adjustments in daily records.
- Monitor for signs of heat stress, dehydration, or cold exposure and respond quickly.
- Provide safe and engaging indoor learning opportunities when outdoor play is not possible.

Families

- Dress children in weather-appropriate clothing (e.g. hats, warm layers, raincoats).
- Send children with a filled water bottle each day.
- Keep children at home if they are unwell or more at risk during extreme weather (e.g. asthma on smoky days).
- Inform educators of any health conditions that may be impacted by weather conditions.

4. Related policies, procedures, and supporting documents

- Sun Protection Policy
- Excursions and Regular Outings Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- [EPA Victoria Air Quality Index updates](#)
- [Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings](#)
- [SunSmart resources and guidelines](#)

5. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

- 6. Consequences of breaching this policy:** All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).
- 7. Policy owner:** The GM Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.
- 8. Document Control:** Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
3.0				
2.0				
1.0	Removed from general procedure manual and separated	Rebecca Davis	4/7/25	July 2025