



Extreme Weather Beach Kinder Policy

This policy summarises some key points about our extreme weather beach kinder program. It should be read in conjunction with all the policies adopted by Flinders Preschool Inc.

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework around which well-informed decisions may be made by Flinders Preschool to cancel Beach Kinder session/s in response to forecast weather conditions, and ensure that parents understand this framework
- Ensure the health and safety of all children and staff when the weather conditions become extreme during a session
- Provide guidelines for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Beach Kinder session
- Provide an appropriate mechanism for communication of session cancellations in extreme weather conditions
- Impress upon parents that they may collect their child from a Beach Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason)

Policy statement

1. Values

Flinders Preschool is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for children participating in the Beach Kinder program
- Facilitating a Beach Kinder experience in a variety of (safe) weather conditions, including rain, to allow children to experience nature across as broad a spectrum as possible and without compromising the safety of the participants
- Accessing appropriate resources to enable well-informed determinations to be made regarding weather conditions
- Facilitating effective and timely communication to parents regarding weather conditions, cancellations or relocation of children in the event of extreme weather
- Respecting the right of parents to remove their child from a Beach Kinder session at any time in response to the weather conditions (or for any other reason).

2. Scope

This policy applies to children, parents, staff, committee members, authorised persons, volunteers and students on placement working at Flinders Preschool.

3. Background and legislation

Flinders Preschool's Beach Kinder program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing the children to experience nature and its elements across the seasons.

Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a bush or natural environment. However, extreme weather conditions may arise periodically which can put the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff at risk. This policy provides the parameters within which the kindergarten can make determinations to cancel Beach Kinder sessions in response to forecast extreme weather conditions and ensure appropriate communication channels are in place to inform participants. It also provides a framework for staff in the event that extreme weather conditions arise during a session and provides procedures for effective evacuation to a safe location.

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*
- National Quality Standards, including Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety and Quality Area 3 – Physical environment
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

4. Definitions

Bureau of Meteorology: Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. Website Various iphone/ipad apps use BOM data (eg Willy Weather)

VicEmergency App: The VicEmergency app is the official Victorian Government app for access to community information and warnings for all types of emergencies in Victoria.

Extreme Weather: weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightning, wind or heat. The risk to individuals' wellbeing is guided by the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions. An extreme weather table is shown below. Beach Kinder sessions will be cancelled if any of these determinants are met:

Weather Condition	Extreme weather determinant causing cancellation
Forecast temperature	35 degrees Celsius or greater or the UV index reaches 8 AND kinder teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel Beach Kinder Note there is no pre-set minimum temperature. Thermals and clothing layers should be worn on very cold days (Refer Protective Clothing Policy)
Forecast wind speed	Organised activities will not be held if: (a) the BOM has issued a severe weather warning for damaging winds in the area for the designated time of the activity; and/or (b) in excess of 40km per hour AND kinder teacher decides that it would be appropriate to cancel beach kinder, based on a final assessment at the site.
Forecast of electrical storm activity	Thunder storm/electrical storm forecast
Flooding at or near the Flinders Pier or Ocean Beach site	On flooding advice from the BOM/ VIC Emergency App.
BOM weather warnings of	On warning issued by the BOM / VIC Emergency App

extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall	
Extreme Fire Danger/ Total Fire Ban / Code Red Day	Organised activities will not be held on Total Fire Ban Days

In addition to the above, Flinders Preschool has the discretion to cancel a session/s if it views the weather to be poor for Beach Kinder purposes, even if the extreme weather determinants in the above table are not reached. Weather warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology or VicEmergency App for the area may also necessitate cancellation.

Further, the local CFA members / Park Rangers have the authority to override the Flinders Preschool determination on safety and request cancellation of a session should he or she feel the Beach Kinder site may be unsafe.

Protective Clothing: Refer to Protective Clothing Policy

Sources and Related Policies

- Beach Kinder Delivery & Collection of Children Policy (BK Specific)
- Beach Kinder Snake Awareness Policy (BK Specific)
- Beach Kinder Emergency Evacuation Policy (BK Specific)
- Beach Kinder Identification and Visibility Policy (BK Specific)
- Beach Kinder Protective Clothing Policy (BK Specific)
- Administration of Medication
- Administration of First Aid
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Excursions and Service Events
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Supervision of Children
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy

Procedures

General

The Committee is responsible for:

- An Extreme Weather Policy which gives clear guidelines to staff and parents about extreme conditions that will necessitate cancellation of a Beach Kinder session/s and provides guidance and procedures for staff in the event of extreme weather during a Beach Kinder session
- All parents being aware of this policy and provided access to the policy upon request
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents in the event of cancellation of a Beach Kinder session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather conditions.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Beach Kinder session. If for whatever reason, a parent feels concern for the wellbeing of their child due to the weather conditions, they should consider withholding their child from the session or collecting their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session.
- Ensuring protective clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided (including shoes) (Refer to Protective Clothing Policy)
- Ensuring they carry a mobile phone with them and be contactable at all times while their child's Beach Kinder session is in progress plus charged walkie talkies.
- Reading and being familiar with the policy
- Bringing relevant issues to the attention of both staff and committee

In the event of forecast extreme or bad weather

In cases of forecast extreme weather (see definition above), Flinders Preschool will make the decision to cancel the beach kinder program for the session(s) affected.

In addition to the extreme weather determinants detailed in the table under 'Definitions', the Flinders Preschool has the discretion to cancel the session if it views the weather to be unsuitable for Beach Kinder purposes, and the local CFA / Park Ranger also has the authority to cancel a session due to extreme weather conditions at the site.

Staff are responsible for:

- Monitoring the weather forecast via the Bureau of Meteorology website (or via mobile phone app) the day prior and on the day of the Beach Kinder session
- Making a determination to cancel or conduct the beach kinder sessions at any time based on the weather forecast
- Providing a notice to parent and staff of the status of the Beach Kinder session/s as follows:
 - By broadcast SMS and/or Seesaw notification to the Beach Kinder group as soon as possible the determination is made - alerts will be sent where possible, by 6pm the day prior to session, or by 8am on the day of the session
 - Note that a Beach Kinder session may be cancelled at short notice or any other time by broadcast SMS and/or Seesaw notification based on updated weather information.
- Keeping their mobile phone with them on the day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation during a session.
- Ensuring communication channels are in place to facilitate notification to parents/guardians in the event of cancellation of a Beach Kinder session or if the group has been evacuated to a safe location in response to extreme weather conditions
- Reminding parents/guardians of the policy content as required.

Parents are responsible for:

- Keeping their mobile phone with them on the day of the session to receive notice of cancellation in cases of extreme weather updates which necessitate cancellation
- Checking Seesaw or mobile for any notifications of session cancellation
- Ensuring they are comfortable at all times with the forecast weather conditions, while their child is attending a Beach Kinder session. If for whatever reason, a parent/guardian feels concern for the wellbeing of their child due to the weather conditions, they should consider withholding their child from the session and collect their child from a session in the event that extreme weather arises during a session

- Making certain they carry a mobile phone with them and be contactable at all times whilst their child's Beach Kinder session is in progress
- Ensuring protective clothing is worn by their child to suit the weather conditions and ensure a change of clothes is provided (including shoes) (Refer to Protective Clothing Policy)
- Bringing any relevant issues to the attention of both Kinder staff and the committee.

In the event of weather becoming extreme during a session

Staff are responsible for:

- Undertaking the following actions in the each of the weather conditions listed in the table below:

Weather condition	Staff Actions
Heat Risks include sunburn, heat stress, heat stroke, dehydration,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor children for heat exhaustion/heat stroke (see Attachment 1 for symptoms and treatments) • offer water for hydration at regular intervals • establish activities in shaded areas and encourage children to play in the shade • ensure application of sunscreen every two hours • ensure appropriate protective clothing including hats. [Refer Protective Clothing Policy for more information]
Rain/Hail/Cold Risks include child getting wet (and onset of hypothermia), injury from hailstones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor children for wet clothing and change if necessary (with assistance of volunteers) • Ensure appropriate clothing is worn (eg, waterproof clothing, gloves) • Encourage wearing of appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves, scarves etc • Seek shelter in heavy rain or in hail [See Relocation Procedures below]
Electrical storm activity / Lightning Risks include lightning strike, trees/tree limbs falling as a result of lightning strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move children away from trees • Seek indoor shelter [See Relocation Procedures below] • See Attachment 2 for Lightning Safety Fact Sheet
High winds Risks include falling trees/tree limbs, blowing particles (sand, dirt) into eyes, Beach Kinder structures blowing down/away etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure structures and dangerous items are secure • Move children away from trees • Seek shelter if necessary [See Relocation Procedures below] • Any equipment/structures must be moved by at least two staff/volunteer to minimise risk of injury • If the children are being moved, follow the 'Relocating to a safe position' instructions below

- In the event of illness or injury during a session as a result of weather conditions, the Illness Policy and Incident and Medical Emergency Management Policy must be followed.
- Contacting parent in the event that a child is ill or injured in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy.

Parents are responsible for:

- Collecting their child at any time during the session if they are not comfortable with the weather conditions
- Collecting their child as soon as possible where staff have determined and communicated to parents the extreme weather event and action taken

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

Procedures for Relocating to a Safe Position

Relocation Safe Zones – Pier Beach

Hail, torrential rain	Seek shelter at Yacht Club (Refer Map at Attachment 3)
Electrical storm/lightning, extreme winds	Seek shelter at Yacht Club (Refer Map at Attachment 3)

Relocation Safe Zones – Ocean Beach

As there is no shelter at the Ocean Beach, in the event there is forecast rain / storms, Beach Kinder will not run from this location and will only run from the Pier Beach where there is adequate cover.

If conditions necessitate evacuation from the Beach, follow procedures in the Emergency Evacuation Policy (Beach Kinder specific)

Procedures for relocating

If the Beach Kinder group is required to relocate to a safe position in response to the weather conditions, the following procedures are to be followed by staff (with the assistance of volunteers):

- Blow whistle
- Keep children calm
- Ensure sign-in book is in the teacher's backpack along with other necessary items such as medication
- Count / check off against the sign in book to ensure all children are accounted for
- With the exception of the teacher's backpack, leave Beach Kinder gear at the site – it can be collected later
- En route to new location (see below for appropriate locations), calmly walk children in pairs, keep group close together and ensure no child deviates from the group.
- Teachers/adult volunteers to be positioned at the front and back of the group, and flanking the group where possible
- Notify emergency services if required
- On arrival at safe assembly point, conduct a full count/roll call to ensure all children are accounted for
- Wait for the extreme weather to pass and when it does, resume normal activities, following same relocation procedures to return to the Beach Kinder site

- If the weather does not look like it will pass soon, a broadcast SMS should be sent to all parents, advising of the new safe location for pickup purposes.

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee will:

- Seek feedback regarding this policy and its implementation with parents of children participating in the Beach Kinder program. This can be facilitated through discussions and the annual centre survey.
- Review the centre's actions in response to extreme weather conditions
- Ask staff to share their experiences in cases of extreme weather (in cases where sessions were cancelled, and in cases where extreme weather arose during a session)
- Regularly review the policy and centre practices to ensure they are compliant with any new legislation, research or best practice procedures.

Attachments

Attachment 1 Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments

Attachment 2: Lightning Action Guide and First Aid Guidelines

Attachment 3: Beach Kinder site map showing safe relocation zones in the event of extreme weather.

Authorisation

Endorsed by the Flinders Preschool Committee of Management on 19 March 2024.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every two years and is next due for formal Committee review February 2025, unless deemed necessary earlier.

REVIEW DATE: March 2024

NEXT REVIEW: March 2026

ATTACHMENT 1

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke – Symptoms and Treatments

Victoria Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/heat)

Heat exhaustion is a serious condition that can develop into heat stroke.

Warning signs may include:

- Pale and sweating
- Rapid heart rate
- Muscle cramps, weakness
- Dizziness, headache
- Nausea, vomiting
- Fainting

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. It occurs when the body is unable to prevent the temperature rising rapidly.

The symptoms may be the same as for heat exhaustion, but the skin may be dry with no sweating, and the person's mental condition worsens. They may stagger, appear confused, have a fit, or collapse and become unconscious.

What to do for heat exhaustion

- Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
- Fan if possible
- Drink cool water if not vomiting
- Remove outer clothing
- Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths • Seek medical advice

What to do for heat stroke

- Call an ambulance
- Get the person to a cool area and lie them down
- Remove clothing and wet skin with water, fanning continuously
- Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway

ATTACHMENT 2

LIGHTNING SAFETY FACT SHEET

Source: Victorian State Government – Education and training (www.education.vic.gov.au)

If thunder happens within 30 seconds of lightning, then the storm is within 10 kilometres of your location. Lightning safety experts consider this the strike danger zone and advise people to follow the 30/30 rule.

The 30/30 rule

Follow the precautions outlined below when thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a lightning flash and wait for 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard to resume your activity. If you're unable to take shelter inside, find the safest accessible location and stay there until the storm has passed.

General precautions:

- Stay away from metal poles, fences, clothes lines etc.
- Never ride horses, bicycles or drive in open vehicles.
- If driving, slow down or park away from trees, power lines or other objects that may be damaged by storm activity.
- Stay inside metal-bodied (hard top) vehicles or caravans but do not touch any metal sections.
- If undertaking water activities, leave the water immediately.
- If boating go ashore to shelter as soon as possible. (A bridge or high jetty may offer immediate protection.)
- Discard all metal objects.

If shelter is near-by:

- Seek shelter in a hard top vehicle or solid building. Avoid small structures or fabric tents.
- Keep clear of windows.

If shelter is not available:

- Crouch (alone, feet together), preferably in a hollow. Make yourself a small target.
- Remove metal objects from head/body.
- Do not lie down (the more of you that is in contact with the ground, the more 'attractive' you are to lightning) but avoid being highest object.
- If your hair stands on end or you hear buzzing on nearby rocks, fences etc, move immediately. At night, a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck.
- Stay away from high and low points (hilltops, ridges & gullies), rock overhangs and shallow caves.
- Keep out of, and well away from, water bodies or watercourses.
- Make sure the group is aware of the Lightning Safe Position. This involves:
 - Squatting or crouching with knees drawn up and feet together, preferably on dry insulating material (eg. foam mat).
 - Keeping hands off the ground.
 - Spread group members out – about ten metres apart, but within calling distance.
- Never shelter under tree/s.

First aid

- Apply immediate CPR to lightning victims until medical help arrives. (You won't receive a shock from the victim.)

For further information contact the State Emergency Service office www.ses.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 3

BEACH KINDER SITE MAP SHOWING SAFE RELOCATION ZONES IN THE EVENT OF EXTREME WEATHER

Pier Beach

Weather event	Safe Relocation Zone
Hail, torrential rain	Yacht Club
Electrical storm/lightning, extreme wind	Yacht Club



Ocean Beach

First or Second Carpark – in the event of any planned storms or poor weather, beach kinder will not operate from this site. In the event that the weather is unplanned and comes suddenly, the safe relocation site is as follows (nothing that the toilet is not currently operational but the building is still there an open)

Weather event	Safe Relocation Zone
Hail, torrential rain	

	Toilet Block
Electrical storm/lightning, extreme wind	Toilet Block



If conditions necessitate evacuation, follow procedures in the Emergency Evacuation Policy (Beach Kinder specific)