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# CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR POLICY

## QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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**National Quality Standard (NQS)**

Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.2	<b>Safety</b>	Each child is protected
2.2.1	<b>Supervision</b>	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children		
5.1	<b>Relationships between educators and children</b>	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child
5.1.1	<b>Positive educator to child interactions</b>	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	<b>Dignity and rights of the child</b>	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

*“The clothing children wear while in care influences the quality of their experiences as clothes can affect their health, safety, comfort, play and learning. These issues apply to the clothes children wear to child care, the extra clothes provided by families, clothes provided by the child care service and to dress-up clothes”. Stonehouse, p1.*

## Introduction

Children's play involves a lot of hands-on activities. Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) believes that it is, therefore, best to dress children in clothes that are tough, easily laundered, and suit the weather.

Children need protective, comfortable and appropriate clothing and footwear to explore their environments. Clothing needs to protect children from injury and sun exposure while promoting self-help abilities. Appropriate footwear should fit a child's foot correctly and ensure comfort. Educators will also dress to prevent injury and sun exposure and will be encouraged to dress in a professional and respectful manner.

## Goals – What are we going to do?

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- develop and maintain a *Sun Protection* policy
- follow the guidelines set by *Cancer Council Australia* to reduce UV exposure throughout the year
- encourage both educators and children to wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions, work environment and social/cultural circumstances
- aim to ensure the comfort, protection, dignity and rights of children at all times of the day by recommending appropriate clothing and footwear guidelines
- provide information to families about suitable clothing for play experiences, sun protection and safety
- respect cultural differences and individual family and educators needs when recommending suitable clothing

## Strategies – How will it be done?

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- ensure that educators are provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g. gloves, goggles (where appropriate) etc.) to facilitate cleaning and health protection measures
- provide information to educators about suitable clothing and footwear expectations for the education and care work environment
- ensure educators are aware of and adhere to the *Sun Protection* policy
- provide information to families about suitable clothing and footwear. This information will also be available at WECC using a variety of communication strategies including newsletters, brochures, websites and posters

Educators will:

- consult with families about the individual needs of children with respect to different values and beliefs associated with clothing and footwear
- monitor children's clothing and footwear to ensure compliance with the *Sun Protection* policy and to support the safety, comfort and well-being of every child
- ensure that children remain dressed in accordance with this *Clothing and Footwear* policy during the time they are in WECC's care and discuss safety concerns with them as they arise
- abide by the policy themselves and act as a role model for the children
- consider clothing and footwear needs associated with excursions or planned learning experiences and communicate clearly with families about the need for any extra protective clothing requirements
- encourage children to remove shoes and heavy/access layers of clothing during rest times and to reflect the room temperature, as recommended practice by SIDS and Kids. This is especially important in the Nursery
- reviewing the children's clothing at sleep time, considering comfort and safety, and changing where

needed

- encourage children to utilize their self-help skills as appropriate to put on and remove clothing and shoes to meet their needs. For younger children, educators will use observation and monitoring skills to ensure children's clothing and footwear is appropriate for the environment and weather conditions
- educate the children about dressing for the weather, particularly as the seasons change

Families will:

- dress children appropriately, including footwear and appropriate hat, which will allow them to explore and play freely and not restrict them using equipment while at play
- ensure clothing also allows easy access for toileting (i.e. elasticized trousers, track pants – rather than buttons, zips, belts, etc.)
- provide spare clothing in children's bags to allow for dirty or soiled clothing and changing weather conditions. A limited supply of spare clothing will be available at WECC for emergency clothing needs
- wash and return any of WECC's spare clothes as soon as possible
- label all items of their child/ren's clothing
- ensure children are appropriately protected from the sun – please refer to the *Sun Protection* policy for further directives on hats and clothing
- ensure children's clothing accommodates for the weather conditions. (i.e. be loose and cool in summer to prevent overheating and warm enough for cold weather – including outdoor play). At all times educators will monitor children to ensure they are appropriately dressed for all weather, play experiences and rest and sleep routines
- ensure children have appropriate footwear that enables them to play comfortably and not cause safety concerns (i.e. thongs, clogs or backless shoes have a trip factor and do not allow children to use equipment safely)

Safety

- durable, hard-wearing, non-slip shoes or sandals are best for indoor and outdoor play as they are flexible and offer good grip. Thongs, gumboots<sup>1</sup>, crocs (and similar) and bare feet can be dangerous, especially when climbing, and are therefore not permitted. Parents are encouraged to talk to any WECC educator about appropriate footwear to be worn while at WECC if they are uncertain
- sun safe clothing must be worn at all times when outside to protect children from harmful UV rays. Singlet tops and sleeveless tops are not to be worn at WECC unless the wearer has a t-shirt underneath for reasons of sun safety (See *Sun Protection* policy)
- children and educators must also wear a sunhat between 1 August and 31 May as per the *Sun Protection* policy. It is the responsibility of families to provide their child with a hat that has a wide brim or legionnaire flap at the back. Caps are not permitted. WECC supplies 50+ sunscreen, which is applied to all children to be exposed to direct sunlight unless parents request otherwise. In accordance with the *Sun Protection* policy, parents are required to apply sunscreen to their child upon their arrival at WECC each morning between 1 Aug and 31 May
- loose and cumbersome clothing is not advisable, as it can be easily caught in climbing equipment and bicycles, causing injury (e.g. long skirts and long hems on pants). Draw cords on hats and jackets can be a hazard when playing actively. We ask that families select clothing without draw cords where possible or remove them

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<sup>1</sup> Gumboots are not suitable for all day wear but may be brought to WECC to be worn when they are appropriate to both the weather and the activity

### *Soiled Clothing*

Families are responsible for laundering their children's clothing and are expected to collect it with their child's bag daily. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and tied to the child's bag for collection at the end of the day.

Where clothing has been soiled by urine, vomit or faeces (particularly during the toilet training process) the clothing may be placed in the laundry awaiting parental collection. By sending such clothing home with families, educators minimise the spread of infection to other educators and children.

Where WECC spare clothes are soiled by vomit or faeces, the educator may, at their decision, choose to throw the clothing out rather than wash it and expose themselves to illness.

Note: Please see WECC's *Infectious Disease* policy for exclusion periods.

## Evaluation

The need for protective, comfortable and appropriate clothing is paramount within the education and care environment. The need to keep children safe and healthy by providing sun smart, weather conscious clothing and appropriate footwear for play is essential.

## Related policies /documents

- Enrolment and orientation
- Excursions
- Inclusion, diversity and anti-bias
- Safe sleep and rest times
- Sun protection

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)

## Sources and references

- SIDS and Kids – [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)
- Cancer Council Australia – [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)
- Podiatry Care – [www.podiatrycare.com.au](http://www.podiatrycare.com.au)
- Raising Children Network – <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

## Authorisation

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2017-18 WECC Management Committee