

POLICY ON SUN PROTECTION

All children when going outside are instructed to use a combination of sun protection measures including a wide brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hat at all times whilst outdoors during the daily sun protection times. Sun protection is needed recommended for all skin types whenever UV levels reach three and above. In Victoria, UV levels regularly reach three or higher from mid-August to end of April. The Centre accesses the SunSmart website UV Alert at www.sunsmart.com.au or www.myuv.com.au or the SunSmart app to find out the daily local sun protection times, and displays it at the reception and in the rooms to make the families aware and also to find out daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

Purpose

This SunSmart policy provides guidelines to:

- ensure all children, educators and staff are protected from over-exposure to UV radiation
- ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for children, educators and staff;
- ensure children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills;
- support duty of care and regulatory requirements; and
- support appropriate OHS strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, staff and visitors.

Background

Too much of the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Infants and toddlers up to four years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower levels of melanin and a thinner stratum corneum (the outermost layer of skin). UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. To help maintain winter vitamin D levels, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above.

From mid- August to the end of April:

Children are required to wear hats to protect their face, neck and ears (legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket style) whenever they are outdoors. If children forget their hat, they choose one from the Centre's pool of wide brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats.

If children refuse to wear a hat, they are encouraged to remain indoors for this duration or play in shaded areas protected from the Sun.

SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen is supplied by the centre. Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes (where possible) before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if exposed to the sun. Although children with naturally dark skin (skin that rarely or never burns) are at lower risk of skin cancer than children with fair skin colour, it is important to keep in mind that all sun exposure carries a risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer. While some sun exposure is necessary for the production of vitamin D, extended and deliberate sun exposure without any form of sun protection when the UV Index is 3 or above is not recommended, even for those diagnosed with vitamin D deficiency. It is recommended that people who may be at risk of vitamin D deficiency discuss their vitamin D requirements with their medical practitioner.

Parents are required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child. If parents do not want their child/children to be sun screened they need to notify the Centre in writing. The child/ children will be required to wear suitable outdoor clothing that is cool and covers as much skin as possible (i.e. that cover the shoulders and chest, upper arms and legs) and a wide brimmed hat. The child/ children will not be exposed to direct sun and will be encouraged (supervised) to play in shaded areas at all times when outdoors.

The children aged 3-5 years are encouraged, supervised and given assistance to apply sunscreen SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum water resistant before going outdoors.

Special note regarding infants

SunSmart practices consider the special needs of infants. All babies under 12months are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are three or higher. Physical protection such as shade, clothing and broad brimmed hats are the best sun protection measures. If babies are kept out of the sun or well protected from UV radiation by clothing hats and shade then sunscreen need only be used occasionally on very small areas of the baby's skin. The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months old is not recommended.

Children are actively encouraged, (and supervised) by educators to play in shaded areas at all times when outdoors, i.e. under shade sails or large trees. The Centre has sufficient number of shaded areas. In consultation with the Board of Management, shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades. A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability of quality of shade.

As part of OHS UV risks controls all staff, students, and volunteers' role-model and apply sunscreen and wear appropriate sun smart hats and clothing, seek shade whenever possible when outdoors supervising children.

The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities. Parents are also encouraged to wear appropriate sun smart hats and apply sun screen when accompanying children on excursions and also while attending the service.

When outside, children are required to wear, loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric is recommended. Tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best. If a child is wearing a singlet top or dress they wear a t-shirt/ shirt over the top before going out doors.

Children are not to wear singlet T-shirts or singlet dresses as per the children's dress policy. If they do so, they are provided with a spare T-shirt from the Centre and parents are requested to supply the appropriate clothing. Loose fitting and closely woven fabrics assist in protecting children from exposure to the sun.

Children and staff are encouraged to wear close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

The Centre provides reading material, informs staff during induction and parents when enrolling their child at the service of SunSmart policy.

Throughout the day staff educate the children about the importance of sun protection, the consequences of sunburn, and appropriate clothing to reinforce the SunSmart policy.

Educational material on sun protection and vitamin D is displayed around the Centre and are incorporated into the learning and development program. Staff educate parents on the ways to achieve maximum sun protection through newsletter, parent handbook, noticeboards, service's website and on (digital program) Educa.

Water is offered to children throughout the day regardless of Indoor/Outdoor play settings. Cool boiled water is offered to infants between feeds.

From May to mid-August:

To help with winter vitamin D, from May to August, sun protection measures are not used unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outdoors for extended periods or when UV levels reach 3 or higher. Children are encouraged to wear a beanie on a cold day.

Management, educators and all staff, monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy and revise the policy when required (at least once every three years) by completing a policy review and membership renewal with SunSmart at SunSmart.com.au. SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to educators, staff, families and visitors.

The Sun Smart Policy next review 2018.

Source: – Cancer Council,

Sample sun smart policy for early childhood education and care service

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/communities/early-childhood-primary-school/ec-sample-sunsmart-policy.doc>

Links to NQS/ Elements: 3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.2.1

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: regulations 100 113,114, 168 (2) (a) (ii)