UV / Sunsmart Policy

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world with more than two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer in their lifetime. 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 strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life (Cancer Council Australia).

By teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age and implementing sun protection measures, early childhood services can play a significant rile in reducing skin cancer risk.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.1	Fit for Purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursions
113	Outdoor space natural environment
114	Outdoor space shade
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
168 (2)(a)(ii)	Sun Protection

170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Bush Fire Policy Clothing Policy Emergency and Evacuation Policy Enrolment Policy Excursion/Incursion Policy	Health and Safety Policy Physical Environment Policy Supervision Policy Water Safety Policy Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

By implementing a 'best practice' UV/Sunsmart Policy, our Service can help-protect all children and staff from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and teach children good sun protection habits from an early age to reduce their risk. To ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for children, educators and staff to minimise unsafe UV exposure. Additionally, this policy provides guidance on how to protect children and staff from severe hot weather events which are becoming more prevalent in Australia resulting from climate change.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service will work in compliance with the *National SunSmart Early Childhood Program* to ensure children's health and safety is maintained at all times whilst at the Service. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Schools and Early Childhood lead at SunSmart. (2024)

Our Service will monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology for notification of severe heat events and implement risk mitigation strategies to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of children. This policy applies to all activities on and off site.

MONITORING UV LEVELS

Sun protection is required when UV levels reach level 3 or above. Our Service will monitor the UV levels daily through one or more of the following methods:

- using the smartphone *SunSmart global UV app* available at iTunes App Store and Google Play store

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times, when the UV Index is 3 or above. The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) for the time of day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, a combination of sun protection is recommended for all skin types.

The Service will use a combination of sun protection measures (see below) **whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.**

SUN PROTECTION TIMES

UV levels vary across Australia and throughout the year. This listing highlights when UV is typically three and above in each state / territory. There may be times UV levels are three and above outside these periods. Please check the daily local sun protection times and UV levels to be sure you are using sun protection when it is required for your location.

VIC Mid-August to the end of April
Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the day all year provided appropriate sun protection measures are used when necessary.

The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the **daily local sun protection times and when the UV index is three and above.** A combination of sun protection measures is considered when planning all outdoor activities such as excursions and water play.

SHADE

THE APPROVED PROVIDER WILL ENSURE:

- sufficient natural, portable, or man-made shade is provided, particularly in high use areas
- shaded areas will be used for play experiences
- play experiences will be monitored throughout the day and moved as required to remain in the shade

- regular risk assessments and reviews will be made of the outdoor area to assist in planning for further shade requirements
- children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun and not move into unshaded areas of the playground
- children will still be required to wear hats, protective clothing, and sunscreen when playing under natural or portable shade.

HATS

Educators, children, and visitors are required to wear sun protective hats at all times they are outdoors.

Cancer

Council Australia describes sun protective hats as:

- hats that protect a person's face, neck, and ears, which include:
    - a legionnaire hat – the front peak and flap should overlap at the sides and the flap should cover the neck
    - a bucket hat with a deep crown and angled brim that is at least 5cm for young children and at least 6cm for adults and must shade the face, neck, and ears
    - a broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm for children or 7.5cm for adults. The brim should provide shade for the whole face

Please note: Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not suitable alternative.

- Children without a sun protective hat will be required to play in an area protected from the sun. They may be provided with a spare hat by the Service if available.

CLOTHING

- When outdoors, staff and children will wear sun protective clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible. Cancer Council Australia recommends clothing that:
    - covers the shoulders, back and stomach
    - is loose fitting such as loose-fitting shirts and dresses with elbow-length sleeves and collars or covered neckline, or longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing sun protective clothing can be provided with spare clothing or will be required to play under shade or in an area protected from the sun or provided with spare clothing. *Please note: Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.*

SUNSCREEN

As per Cancer Council Australia recommendations:

- staff and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours or more frequently if washed or wiped off
- permission to apply sunscreen is included in the Service enrolment form (see *Enrolment Policy*)
- where children have allergies or sensitivity to the sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen, or the child is encouraged to play in the shade. A record of any allergy must be provided in writing from the parent/guardian and recorded on the child's enrolment record. Cancer Council Australia recommends usage tests before applying a new sunscreen.
- to help develop independent skills ready for school, children from three years of age are given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff, and are encouraged to do so
- sunscreen is stored in a supervised, cool dry place and the use-by-date monitored.

SUNSCREEN FOR BABIES

Recommendations for babies from the Cancer Council Australia include:

- babies under 12 months will not be exposed to direct sun when the UV Index levels is 3 or above
- ensure routine includes inside activities during the middle of the day
- physical protection such as shade positioning, clothing and broad-brimmed hats are the best sun protection measures
- check the baby's clothing, hat and shade positioning regularly to ensure protection from UV.

If babies are kept out of the sun or well protected from UV radiation by clothing, hats and shade, they will avoid the need for sunscreen. Avoiding the use of sunscreen for babies aged six months or younger (or as recommended by recognised authorities) ACECQA, Sun Protection Guidelines (2021).

RISKS OF SUMMER PLAY

Australia has a hot climate and inevitably playground equipment and surfacing can heat up rapidly and retain heat. Many playground surfaces and equipment can exceed temperatures greater than 50°C and if young children come into contact with these surfaces, they can be burned severely within seconds. Surfaces can retain heat for long periods of time and cause burns to children. Play surfaces must be monitored before children have access to the outdoor environment.

SEVERE HEAT

Severe heat or heatwaves are periods of unusually hot weather. Climate change is resulting in more intense heatwaves in Australia and presents an extreme risk to the health and safety of children. Babies

and young children can dehydrate quickly which can cause heat-related illness including heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Active heatwave warnings are indicated within the Australian Warning System (AWS) and range from Advice to Emergency Warning. Risk management measures must be implemented and managed to ensure children remain safe and healthy during a severe heat event.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- ensure obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations* are met
- ensure risk assessments are conducted to identify any potential hazards to children during summer months that could cause harm or injury to children. Risk minimisation control measures will be put in place to protect children. Potential hazards could include:
    - hot equipment- slides, poles, guardrails, any metal surfaces
    - hot surfaces- rubber and synthetic grass, walkways, concrete surfaces
    - sun burn and dehydration
    - access to bodies of water (filled water troughs/containers/trays/pools)
    - severe heat
    - bushfires and air pollution
- complete a *Daily Playground Surface Temperature Check* during summer months or extreme hot weather
- use a thermometer or their hand to test surface temperature and make an informed decision about permitting children to play on equipment or in the outdoor space. If the surface temperature is determined to be too hot or is recorded as at or above 50°C it is recommended by Kidsafe Australia that children do NOT play on the surface
- ensure children wear shoes when playing in the outdoor area- [children may remove shoes when playing in sand/ mud pit/ Water Play or on grass]
- monitor the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) for severe weather warnings and implement procedures to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff
- monitor bush fire activity and be aware of air quality and hazardous levels of air pollution caused by bushfires *(see: Bushfire Policy)*
- ensure children have access to water at all times throughout the day and offer extra feeds/drinks to babies during hot weather to avoid dehydration
- be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness in babies and young children and implement first aid as required

- keep children indoors during severe heat events
- ensure fans/air conditioning are used to help keep children cool
- close blinds/curtains where required to prevent sun shining into rooms
- adhere to Victorian health department advice for hot weather risks and recommendations

ROLE MODELLING AND WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

Cancer Council Australia acknowledges that children are more likely to develop sun-safe habits if they are role-modelled and demonstrated by adults around them. Occupational UV exposure is also a WH&S issue. All educators, staff at the Service will therefore be required to role model appropriate sun protection behaviours by:

- wearing a sun protective hat (see Hats)
- wearing sun protective clothing (see Clothing)
- applying SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors
- using and promoting shade
- wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067:2003 (optional)
- discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the Service
- regularly drinking water and encouraging children to drink extra water in hot weather
- adapting the learning environment when severe weather events occur
- families and visitors are encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour
- monitoring the UV Index Levels and Daily Sun Protection times throughout the day
- regularly monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the *Sun Safety Policy*
- submitting the Sun Safety Policy to the Cancer Council annually.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- Sun protection will be incorporated regularly into learning programs
- Sun protection information will be promoted to staff, families and visitors
- Severe hot weather events will be monitored through the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and risk mitigation measures implemented
- Educators and staff are encouraged to complete free Cancer Council Generation SunSmart online PL learning modules
- Further information and resources are available from the Cancer Council website and each state and territory SunSmart web page. See: https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety

- See https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools for links.
- The *Sun Safety Policy* will be made available to all educators, staff, students, families, volunteers and visitors of the Service to ensure a comprehensive understanding about keeping sun safe including appropriate hat, clothing and sunscreen requirements
- When enrolling their child/ren to our Service, parents will be required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child – either Service or family supplied sunscreen
- Should parents not provide permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child, the child will be required to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors)
- Information about Sun Safety will be included in our Family Handbook and sun protection information and resources made accessible and communicated regularly to families

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Sun Safe Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

Australian Safety Standards

AS 4174:2018 Knitted and woven shade fabrics
AS/NZS 1067.1:2016, Eye and face protection - Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
AS/NZS 4399:2020, Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification
AS/NZS 2604:2012 Sunscreen products - Evaluation and classification
AS/NZS 4685.0:2017, Playground equipment and surfacing - Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.6.2.1 General considerations, 6.3.9 Shade and sun protection, Appendix A Shade and sun protection

SOURCES

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Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). *Guide to the National Quality Framework.*
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Australian Government. Bureau of Meteorology. Home page (for UV Index): http://www.bom.gov.au/uv/
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Cancer Council. Preventing cancer: Sun protections. https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety
Children's Services Act 1996
Cancer Council. SunSmart programs http://www.sunsmartnsw.com.au/about/

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023)
Kidsafe NSW. How Hot is Too Hot To Play?
NSW Government. Department of health. (2023). *Babies and young children in hot weather*
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) (2019).

REVIEW

Please note: Certain health conditions and medications mean some people are more sensitive to UV radiation and need to use sun protection at all times regardless of the UV levels. Please make sure your policy includes the particular needs of these children and staff at your school/service. For further information visit Risk factors for skin cancer .

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Krystle Hills	Manager	25/09/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	SEPTEMBER 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	SEPTEMBER 2025
MODIFICATIONS	• Edits reflect current evidence informed SunSmart protection guidelines: updates to state/territory specific information; new data relating to skin cancer diagnosis now 2 in 3 Australians • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
January 2024	• additional information added to policy regarding managing severe hot weather • additional related policies added • regular policy maintenance • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • best practice measures checked with Cancer Council • CCD related resources added • Reformatting • Update SPF 30+ to SPF 50+ • Changed sun safe to sun protective	September 2024
October 2023	• regular policy maintenance • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • best practice measures checked with Cancer Council • CCD related resources added	SEPTEMBER 2024