

HEALTH & SAFETY - SUN PROTECTION

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children attending the service are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun throughout the year.

A healthy balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

The policy aims to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitude towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes within the organisation to reduce the level of sun exposure.

NOTE: the requirement for hats, sunscreen and protective clothing applies from September 1st until May 1st, discretion to be used in the case of unseasonably hot/sunny days (where UV exceeds 3) outside this period, or for children with very high sun sensitivity. At the beginning and end of the Sunsmart period, staff will check the UV rating on the BoM site; if the rating is under 3, sunscreen measures are not needed. The UV rating level app has also been added to the organisation's website to allow for ease of access.

PROCEDURE

From September to April in Victoria

When average UV Index levels reach 3 and above, a combination of sun protection measures are used whenever outdoors including:

1. As part of general skin protection strategies:

- 1.1. Children and educators will wear hats which protect the face, neck and ears when outside - broad-brimmed or legionnaire style, and tops which cover shoulders and upper arms. UV approved sunglasses (marked with child's name) may be provided by parents: educators will encourage children to wear them.
- 1.2. 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 should wear a t-shirt/ shirt over the top before going outdoors.
- 1.3. Outdoor activities will be held in shaded areas whenever possible.
- 1.4. The Management Committee will ensure adequate provision of shelters and shade trees.
- 1.5. The service will incorporate sun protection awareness and vitamin D activities in educational programs.
- 1.6. Educators will apply sunscreen to children each morning and afternoon at least 20 minutes before they play outdoors. If the children are outside for more than 2 hours, sunscreen will be reapplied. Children who don't/can't wear sunscreen will be kept to covered or densely shaded areas. Children with naturally very dark skin do not need to wear sunscreen.
- 1.7. From 3 years of age, children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff.

2. Staff will:

- 2.1. Be expected to practice skin protection behaviour such as wearing protective hats - broad-brimmed or legionnaire and covering clothing. Be expected to apply sunscreen on themselves.
- 2.2. Direct children to use shaded areas where possible.

Health & Safety- SUN PROTECTION

3. When enrolling a child, parents will be:

- 3.1. Informed of the Sun Protection Policy through Parent Information Booklet, board notices before summer months, and newsletter.
- 3.2. Requested to provide a hat (either broad-brimmed or legionnaire style) for use in all outdoor activities, shirts and tops with collars and sleeves made of closely woven fibre.
- 3.3. Encouraged to practice skin protective behaviour themselves as positive role models.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Parents to provide hats to be left at the service, or in child's bag.
2. Educators will wash communal hats regularly.
3. Educators to supply their own hat, and wear it whenever on outside duty
4. The Sun Protection Policy will be implemented between the months of September to April.
5. Sunscreen will be applied in the mornings before outdoor play and after lunch or when children get up from their rest.
6. Educators may apply sunscreen at other times if it has been longer than two hours since the previous application
7. Babies under 12 months will be kept out of direct sun from September to April. When outdoors they should be dressed in clothing that will protect them from the sun and wear a hat. A small amount of sunscreen may be applied to exposed areas but this will be avoided where possible.
8. Daily recording of UV Index levels will be displayed at the service, and on the service's website

From May to August in Victoria

When average UV Index levels are below 3, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

Relevant Documents / Links

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Reg 114,
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
- Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings: Section 2: Physical activity
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006) ARPANSA Radiation Protection Series No. 12
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight

Source: Sunsmart Victoria – website, posters and booklets 2006, 2009, 2015
Reviewed Jan 2007, Feb 2008, July 2009, Sept 2009, February 2015

Reviewed Jan 2007, Feb 2008, July 2009, Sept 2009, February 2015, September 2016