

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

This policy was written in consultation with Cancer Council Victoria's SunSmart Program. The SunSmart Sample Sun Protection Policy was last updated in December 2013 and is incorporated into the ELAA policy. For more detailed information visit the SunSmart website: sunsmart.com.au

PURPOSE

This policy will provide:

- guidelines to ensure children, educators, volunteers and others participating in [Service Name] programs and activities maintain a healthy balance of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure
- information for parents/guardians, educators, volunteers and children attending [Service Name] regarding a healthy balance of UV radiation exposure.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

MEEC is committed to:

- promoting sun protection strategies for children, families, staff and visitors to minimise the harmful effects of over exposure to UV radiation, while allowing some UV exposure for vitamin D requirements
- ensuring that curriculum planning will minimise over exposure to UV radiation and also promote an awareness of sun protection and sun safe strategies
- providing information to children, educators, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service about the harmful and beneficial effects of exposure to the sun's UV radiation.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of MEEC.

This policy will apply from the beginning of September until the end of April each year. During this period a combination of sun protection measures are to be used for all outdoor activities.

Sun protection may also be required at other times of the year when the UV Index level is at 3 or above. Information about the UV Index level is available in the weather section of the daily newspaper, on the SunSmart website at: www.sunsmart.com.au, as a free SunSmart app and as a free widget that can be added to websites.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Balanced exposure to UV radiation is important for health. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Research suggests that young children and babies have sensitive skin and are therefore more vulnerable to sunburn and skin damage. Exposure to the sun in the first 15 years plays a major role in the risk of developing skin cancer in later life.

It is also important to have a healthy balance of UV radiation exposure. 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. Appropriate levels of sun exposure can vary from child to child. According to the World Health Organization and SunSmart recommendations, children with naturally very dark skin may not be required to wear sunscreen to help with vitamin D requirements. This should be discussed with parents/guardians prior to the child commencing at the service.

From May put sun gear away

Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones, muscles and general wellbeing. The best natural source of vitamin D is the sun's UV. From May to August when UV levels are low (below 3), Victorian services are advised to put sunhats and other sun protection gear away and ensure staff and children get some sun for vitamin D. At this time of the year, most people need to expose their face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) to midday winter sun for 2-3 hours spread over the week. Those with naturally very dark skin may need 3-6 times this amount. Sun protection is not normally required at this time of year, unless near highly reflective surfaces such as snow, outside for extended periods or when the UV reaches 3 and above.

SunSmart's tips to help your service get some sun exposure for vitamin D:

- Physical activity assists with production of vitamin D, so get the children outside and active in the middle of the day
- Clothing acts as a barrier to vitamin D absorption, so put away the hat and roll up the sleeves when you're outdoors
- Upload [SunSmart's UV Alert widget](#) to your service's website to know the times when sun protection is or isn't required
- Share the vitamin D message with families using SunSmart's vitamin D information sheets available in 12 [different languages](#)
- Visit the SunSmart website at sunsmart.com.au where children can [create a personalised vitamin D poster](#).

It is a requirement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* that employers provide a healthy and safe environment for all persons who access the service's facilities and/or programs.

Legislation that governs the operation of approved children's services is based on the health, safety and welfare of the children and requires that children are protected from hazards and harm.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 113, 114, 168(2)(a)(ii)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
 - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Clothing for sun protection: Clothing that is loose-fitting, made from cool, densely woven fabric and covers as much skin as possible: tops with elbow-length sleeves and, if possible, collars and knee-length or longer-style shorts and skirts. Singlet tops and shoestring tops/dresses do not provide adequate protection in the sun.

Shade: An area sheltered from direct and indirect sun, such as a large tree, canopy, verandah or artificial cover. Shade can be built, natural or temporary and can reduce overall exposure to the sun's UV by 75%. When combined with appropriate clothing, hats and sunscreen, children can be well protected from UV overexposure when outdoors. Research shows that spacious preschool environments with trees, shrubbery, and broken ground not only provides better sun protection in outdoor play but also triggers more physical activity.

Sunglasses: Sunglasses are optional. If worn, it is recommended that glasses are a close fitting, wrap-around style that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible. Wearing a hat with a brim that shades the eyes can also reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%. **Sunscreen:** SPF 30 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours, even when labelled 4 hours water resistance. Monitor the expiry date and store in a cool, dry place. From 3 years of age, children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff.

SunSmart: The name of the program conducted by Cancer Council Victoria to promote a healthy UV exposure balance to help prevent skin cancer and maintain vitamin D: www.sunsmart.com.au

Sunhat: To help protect the neck, ears, temples, face and nose, SunSmart recommends broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket-style hats. Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck, and are not recommended.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 – Playgrounds and Playground Equipment Part 1: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation Shade/Sun Protection
- Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) 2008, *Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight 2008*
- Cancer Council Australia: www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood*. Department of Health resources. Particularly Section 2 of the Director/Coordinator Book and the Staff Book: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>
- SunSmart: www.sunsmart.com.au

Service policies

- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- maintaining membership of the SunSmart early childhood program
- ensuring that this policy is up to date with current SunSmart recommendations: www.sunsmart.com.au
- ensuring parents/guardians are informed about the *Sun Protection Policy* on enrolment, including the need to provide an appropriate sunhat and clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) for their child when attending the service
- providing a supply of sunscreen for use on all persons to whom this policy applies
- ensuring parents/guardians provide an authority for staff to apply sunscreen prior to their child commencing at the service (Attachment 1) and that this is stored with each child's enrolment record (refer to *General Definitions*)
- ensuring children wear appropriate sunhats, clothing for sun protection and sunscreen when attending the service
- providing appropriate spare sunhats for children and adults that will be laundered after each use
- ensuring there is adequate shade in the service grounds to protect children from overexposure to UV radiation (Regulation 114)
- ensuring that program planning includes the application of a combination of sun protection measures for outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy

- ensuring that the availability of shade is considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other outdoor events (Regulations 100, 101)
- ensuring that information on sun protection is incorporated into the educational program (refer to the SunSmart website)
- ensuring educators, staff, children and other participants at the service wear sunhats, clothing for sun protection and sunglasses (optional) when outside, apply sunscreen and seek shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring educators and staff are aware of the special needs of infants including the need to keep babies under 12 months out of direct sun whenever UV levels are three and above
- reinforcing this policy by providing information on sun protection (available on the SunSmart website) to service users via newsletters, noticeboards, meetings and websites etc.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the *Sun Protection Policy* on enrolment, including the need to provide an appropriate sunhat and clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) for their child when attending the service
- obtaining a parent's/guardian's authority for staff to apply sunscreen prior to their child commencing at the service (Attachment 1) and storing this with each child's enrolment record (refer to *General Definitions*)
- ensuring program planning includes the application of a combination of sun protection measures for outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring educators and staff are aware of the need to keep babies under 12 months out of direct sun whenever UV levels are three and above
- ensuring the SunSmart UV Alert on the SunSmart website is accessed to check the daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy
- ensuring information on sun protection is incorporated into the educational program (refer to the SunSmart website)
- ensuring that the availability of shade is considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other outdoor events (Regulations 100, 101).

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- accessing the SunSmart UV Alert on the SunSmart website to check the daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy
- wearing sunhats, clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) and sunglasses (optional) when outside, applying sunscreen and seeking shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring each child, and any other participant at the service, wears an appropriate sunhat, clothing for sun protection and sunscreen for all outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- keeping babies under 12 months out of direct sun whenever UV levels are three and above
- checking that all sunhats brought to the service meet the SunSmart recommendation for adequate protection, are named and stored individually
- ensuring spare sunhats are laundered after each use
- applying sunscreen (refer to *Definitions*) to children's exposed skin – except in cases where parents/guardians have not given authority. Where possible this should be done 20 minutes before going outdoors. Children, where appropriate, will be encouraged to apply sunscreen with the assistance of an educator (sunscreen is to be reapplied every two hours)
- storing sunscreen in a cool place and monitoring the expiry date – including for sunscreen supplied by parents/guardians
- ensuring that children without appropriate sunhats or clothing for sun protection play in the shade or in a suitable area protected from the sun

- encouraging children to seek shade when playing outside and utilise shaded areas for outdoor equipment that is not fixed during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- encouraging children to wear sunhats when travelling to and from the service
- ensuring that sun protection strategies are a priority when planning excursions
- co-operating with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- providing a named, SunSmart approved sunhat (refer to *Definitions*) for their child's use at the service
- applying sunscreen to their child before the commencement of each session during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- providing written authority for staff to apply sunscreen to their child. Parents/guardians of children with naturally very dark skin may decide not to provide this authority to ensure their child receives adequate levels of vitamin D (Attachment 1). This should also be discussed with educators at the service
- providing, at their own expense, an alternative sunscreen to be left at the service if their child has a particular sensitivity to the sunscreen provided by the service
- wearing a sunhat, clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) and sunglasses (optional) when outside at the service, applying sunscreen and seeking shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy.

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

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Authority for staff to administer sunscreen

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of MEEC on 9 August 2016

REVIEW DATE: 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy has been reviewed and approved by Cancer Council Victoria on 27 November 2013.

ATTACHMENT 1

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen provided by the service

I, _____, give/do not give permission for the staff at [Service Name] to apply, as appropriate, SPF 30+ or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to all exposed parts of my child's body.

(Name of child)

Signature (parent/guardian)

Date

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen provided by the parent/guardian

I, _____, give permission for the staff at [Service Name] to apply, as appropriate, to all exposed parts of my child's body the sunscreen that I have supplied and labelled with my child/children's name. This sunscreen is an SPF 30+ or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. I understand that this sunscreen will be kept at the service.

It is my responsibility to ensure there is always an adequate supply of this sunscreen at the service.

(Name of child)

Signature (parent/guardian)

Date