

# Sun Protection Policy



## Purpose

Early Years @ Phoenix Park is committed to:

- Providing all service participants with protection from the harmful effects caused by too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation, during all aspects of the program on or offsite.
- Educating children, parents/guardians, educators and other participants in the service on the harmful effects of too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation.
- Ensuring practices are in accordance with Cancer Council's SunSmart policy to ensure the sun protection of staff and families.
- Ensuring sufficient shade is provided in the outdoor environments for all to participate safely in outdoor experiences.
- Supporting appropriate Occupational and Health Safety strategies to minimise UV risks for staff, educators and visitors.

## Definitions

*Sun-protective clothing* - Loose fitting, close-weave clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Tops with elbow length sleeves, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts.

*Shade* - An area sheltered from sunlight, for example, a large tree, canopy, or artificial cover.

*Sunscreen* - SPF 50+ (30+minimum), broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

*SunSmart* - The name of the program conducted by The Cancer Council Victoria to promote an awareness of the need to provide sun protection.

*Sun hat/head covering providing sun protection* - To protect the neck, ears, temples, face and nose. Broad brimmed, legionnaire, or bucket style hats. (Baseball caps and visors offer little protection and are therefore not acceptable under this policy).

## General information

Although our senses can easily detect sunlight and infrared radiation (heat), they cannot detect the level of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. UV radiation can't be seen or felt and can be damaging to our skin on cool, cloudy days as well as hot, sunny ones. Whenever UV radiation index levels reach 3 (moderate) and above, sun protection measures are required. At that level UV radiation is intense enough to damage our skin and contribute to the risk of skin cancer.

In Victoria from September to April, the UV radiation index levels are 3 and above for most of the day. Particular care should be taken between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) when UV levels reach their peak.

From May to August, the UV radiation index levels in Victoria are usually low (below 3) but sometimes this may vary, therefore sun protection may still be needed, and levels checked regularly.

## **Role and responsibilities of early childhood educators**

There is enormous potential for early childhood centres to prevent skin cancer in future generations. Early childhood centres are central to protecting children's skin. This is because children under 5yrs are particularly vulnerable to UV damage and children attend centres at times when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are high.

- Protecting children from foreseeable harm is part of a centre's duty of care to children. As part of an employer's general duty of care under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, staff working all or part of their day outside should be protected from the sun's UV radiation. Sun exposure for staff is an Occupational Health & Safety issue. They must wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses; apply sunscreen; and seek shade whenever possible.
- Centres can play a significant role in changing behaviours through role modelling and education. Children often copy those around them and learn by imitation. When staff adopt sun protection behaviours the children are more likely to do the same. Education is included in the children's curriculum for all age groups on the ways to protect our skin using Sun Smart's recommended "Outside 5".
- Staff check the Arpana site or SunSmart app on the room iPad for real time readings of uv levels throughout the day. When alert levels reach 3 and above, sun smart methods need to be employed. When levels are between 6 and 8, staff are to bring children indoors or remain in fully shaded areas, when the level reaches 8, children are to be brought indoors.
- Staff ensure a combination of sun protection measures are applied during outdoor time when UV levels are above 3 and with particular care taken between 10.00am and 2.00pm (11.00am and 3.00pm daylight saving time) when UV levels reach their peak. Staff ensure other adult participants in the program undertake the sun protection measures.
- It is helpful if families understand the service's sun protection policy and are aware of how they can assist by providing appropriate clothing, hats, and possibly sunglasses, and being good role models themselves. Newsletters, emails, handbook and noticeboards will be used to keep families informed.

### **The 'Outside 5'**

Sun Smart recommend using a combination of these five important sun protection measures:

#### **1. Shade**

Try to use shade whenever possible. Even while in the shade, UV radiation can reflect from surfaces such as water, sand and concrete so it is important that children continue to wear a hat, appropriate clothing and sunscreen.

Management ensure sufficient shade is available in all play areas. Staff encourage children to seek shade when playing outside, making some experiences available in the shaded grounds. Infants under 12months will not spend periods of time in direct sun.

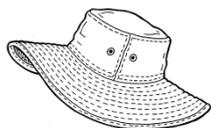
#### **2. Sun-protective clothing**

As well as hats, Sun Smart recommends loose fitting, close weave clothing that covers as much skin as possible during outside activities. Tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best.

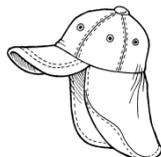
Staff educate and encourage families on suitable sun protective clothing and ensure children wearing singlet tops must play indoors or change into sleeved shirts to go outdoors.

### 3. Hats

To protect the neck, ears, temples, face and nose, children and staff are to wear a broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat.



*Broad brimmed hat*



*Legionnaire hat*



*Bucket hat*

Broad brimmed hats should have a brim of at least 7.5 cm (6 cm for very young children). A legionnaire hat should have the front peak and the long, back flap meet at the sides to protect the side of the face, neck and ears. Bucket hats should have a deep crown and a brim of at least 5 cm for young children. (Baseball caps and visors offer little protection and are therefore not acceptable under this policy).

Staff ensure each child and any other participant at the service, wears an appropriate sun hat for all outdoor activities during their attendance at any time the UV level is above 3. Staff ensure that all hats brought to the service are named and meet the Sun Smart recommendation for adequate protection and that the children's sun hats are stored in their bags, individual pegs, or in individual lockers.

If a child does not bring a suitable sun hat a spare hat may be offered. If the spare hat is not used or a child is not wearing appropriate sun protective clothing, children will be asked to play indoors. Staff ensure the spare hats are laundered after each use.

### 4. Sunglasses

Eyes, like skin, can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. Sun Smart suggests, where practical, wearing close fitting, wrap around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible. The sunglasses should meet Australian Standard 1067 (sunglasses: category 2, 3 or 4) and preferably be marked EPF 10 (eye protection factor). There are products available that have been specifically designed for babies and toddlers and have soft elastic to keep them in place.

While this service will not supply sunglasses to children attending the service we will encourage the wearing of sunglasses where they have been supplied by the parents / guardians.

### 5. Sunscreen

It is important to teach children to apply SPF 50+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and to reapply if continuing outdoor activity after 2 hours. Sunscreen screens out UV radiation but does not completely block it out so some UV radiation still reaches our skin.

Cancer council sunscreen is provided at the centre. Families are requested to advise the centre if children have had a reaction to this and if so, families are asked to supply their own sunscreen for use at the service.

Staff will support and assist children with the application of sunscreen, (as appropriate given the child's age) supporting the development of independent sun protection skills. Sunscreen is to be reapplied at the required intervals and prior to returning outside.

**Sources:**

- SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Program, 2017, Sample Sun Protection Policy for Early Childhood Services, Sunsmart, Melbourne.
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Victoria)
- Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework (2009)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) (2016)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- ARPANSA website
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note – Sun protection for outdoor workers (2016)

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Reviewed: September 2017

**Next Review: August 2019**

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