

Early Years Services – QA 2.14 Sun Protection Policy & Procedure

TRIM Reference: D15/35300 Due for Review: 28 February 2025
Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to ensure that all children, staff/educators are protected from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

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.

The World Health Organisation has cautioned that *'children's UV exposure should be carefully limited because they are in a dynamic state of growth and therefore more susceptible to environmental threats than adults. Many vital functions such as the immune system are not fully developed at birth, and unsafe environments may interfere with their normal development'* (www.who.int/health-topics/ultraviolet-radiation#tab=tab_2).

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 2.3, 2.3.2, 7.3.5

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services Regulations: 100, 113, 114, 168 (2) (ii)

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020

Scope

This policy relates to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, volunteers and children utilising the services.

Policy

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff/educators and management will implement the following Early Years Services Sun Protection Policy & Procedure in each service.

- All Early Years Services follow the principles of the Cancer Council SunSmart program.
- Staff/educators will be inducted into Sun Protection/SunSmart practices at orientation, ongoing discussion and professional development of Sun Protection/SunSmart procedures and considerations will occur.
- Families will be provided with information about Sun Protection/SunSmart practices during orientation into the service through noticeboard displays, discussion with staff/educators and newsletter articles.
- Where applicable the Sun Protection policy will be clearly displayed/available for parents/guardians/children/staff/educators to read.
- Sun Protection/SunSmart activities will be included in the early childhood education and care program.
- All children, staff/educators will use a combination of Sun Protection measures during the sun protection times (whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above). Particular care is taken between 10am and 2pm (11am and 3pm daylight saving time) when UV Index levels reach their peak during the day.
- Sun Protection measures are not used from May until mid-August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above. www.sunsmart.com.au (Today's UV levels).

The Service's Sun Protection/SunSmart practices consider the special needs of infants, a baby's skin is thin, extremely sensitive and can burn easily. The more sun exposure during childhood, the greater the risk of skin cancer in later life. Cancer Council Victoria recommends that babies under 12 months are not exposed to direct sun during the daily sun protection times (when the UV Index is 3 or higher). Our service acknowledges that the best sun protection can be achieved when a combination of physical sun protection measures such as shade, clothing and hats are used. For those small areas of exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats, we apply approved sunscreen to infants six months and older.

Sun protection times

To assist with the implementation of this policy, educators and children are encouraged to access the local sun protection times via the SunSmart widget on the service's website, the free SunSmart app or at sunsmart.com.au or myuv.com.au.

The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times.*

*The sun protection times from the Bureau of Meteorology tell you the time of day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types. In Victoria, UV levels regularly reach 3 or higher from mid-August to the end of April.

The Surf Coast Shire Council Torquay Children's Hub and Kurrabee Myaring Community Centre will display the sun protection times and UV index rating on a daily basis. The following Early Years Services will have direct access to this: Occasional Care, 3 and 4 year old Kindergarten.

Other Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services are required to access the sun protection times and UV Index from the website. www.sunsmart.com.au (Today's UV levels).

Enrolment

When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of the Services Sun Protection policy and procedures.
- Asked to provide a suitable hat for their child.
- Asked to provide their child with suitable outdoor clothing that is cool and covers as much skin as possible.
- Asked to provide SPF30 (or higher), broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for their child. (*Some Services provide this – see Sunscreen section below*).

Managing the Physical Environment – Shade

Outdoor play experiences are an important part of our children's healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development. Early Years Services must ensure that outdoor spaces at the service premises include adequate shaded areas to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Shade may be provided by large trees, heavy shade cloths and solid roofs.

- The Sun Protection policy and procedure is considered when planning all outdoor activities.
- Where possible, outdoor activities/events will be scheduled to minimise time in direct sun.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and outdoor activities; including indoor venues where applicable. A risk assessment must be conducted before excursion, noting assessment of sun protection
- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Where used, prams or strollers should have a hood that can be adjusted to block out the direct sun.
- Where outdoor swimming activities apply, rash vests or t-shirts are also required.

Protective behaviours and practices

Clothing

- When outside, children, staff/educators are required to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. (Please note: singlet tops do not offer enough protection and are therefore not appropriate).
- All children, staff/educators are required to wear hats that protect their face, back of the neck, eyes and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hats. (Please note: baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not acceptable).

The policy of "No hats/appropriate clothing, no outdoor play/outings" will be enforced by staff/educators.

Sunglasses (suggested)

- Children and staff/educators are encouraged to wear close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067:2003 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

Sunscreen Provision / Application

Kindergarten/ Occasional Care

- SPF 30 (or higher), broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff/educators and children's use.

General

- Parents/guardians are required to give permission for staff to apply sunscreen to their child.
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.
- To help develop independent skills ready for school, children from 3 years of age are given opportunities and encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff.
- Staff/educators will observe strict health and hygiene practices when applying sunscreen to minimise risks to themselves and children.
- Where a child has sensitive skin/allergies/preferences parents are required to provide the appropriate alternative sunscreen product.

Extreme Heat

Refer to *Early Years Extreme Weather Works Instructions*.

Role modelling

Children learn about skin and ways to protect their skin from the sun by example. Staff/educators will act as role models by:

- Wearing sun protective hats, clothing, and sunglasses when outside.
- Applying SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.
- Seeking shade whenever possible.

Consistent with the requirements of the *HR 08 Protection of Outdoor Workers from Ultraviolet Radiation*

Definitions

SunSmart program

The SunSmart program is jointly funded by Cancer Council Victoria and the Victorian Health Promotion. The aim of the SunSmart program is to reduce skin cancer incidence, morbidity and mortality through a targeted prevention and early detection program.

Ultraviolet Index (UVI)

A measure of the level of UVR. The higher the UVI, the greater the potential for damage to the skin and eyes, and the less time it takes for harm to occur. Sun protection measures are recommended when the UVI is 3 and above.

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Policies

WHS 22.0	Working in Seasonal Heat
WHS 21.0	Protection of workers from UVR
MPP018	Workplace Health and Safety Policy
D14/70705	Early Years Excursions Policy
D15/35312	Early Years Child Safe Environment Policy
D15/16286	Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy
D15/74476	Bush Kinder Extreme Weather Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Work Instructions and Forms

D19/24712 Template - Excursion Parent Permission Form
 D14/87971 WHS 2.2 Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan Template

Other References

[Suggested learning experiences](#) for sun protection
[Sun protection resources and information for early childhood services](#)
[Sun protection advice for parents and carers](#)
[Sun protection information for babies and toddlers](#)
[Sun protection information in different languages](#)
 The Cancer Council Victoria website
 Education and Care Services National Law 2010
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
 ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit
 Victorian Children’s Services Regulations 2020
 Australian Standards for sun protection clothing (2020), sunscreen (2021) sun glasses (2016) and shade cloth (2018).
 The Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program – Sun Protection Benchmarks 2022.
 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*
 ARPANSA [Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation](#) (2006)
 Safe Work Australia: [Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#) (2019)
 World Health Organisation www.who.int/health-topics/ultraviolet-radiation

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Approved	General Manager Culture and Community – 1 April 2014
2	Amended	Manager Aged and Family – 1 June 2015
3	Amended	Manager Aged and Family – 14 August 2017
4	Amended	Manager Aged and Family – 8 May 2019
5	Amended	Manger Community Strengthening – 11 September 2020
6	Amended	Manger Community Strengthening – 29 March 2022
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