Sun Protection

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

This policy is guided by the paramount consideration that children's safety, rights and best interests are upheld above all other considerations in all decisions, actions and practices.

Policy Statement

St Mark's Preschool and Long Day Care Centre here is committed to providing an environment that ensures all children and staff are protected from ultraviolet (UV) radiation during all outdoor activities, wherever UV levels are three and above. The sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. To reduce the effects of UV damage accumulated during childhood, our service will ensure:

- All children, educators, students, and volunteers are protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- The outdoor environment is sun safe and provides shade for educators and student volunteers.
- Children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills.
- duty of care and regulatory requirements are met
- appropriate Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, volunteers and visitors.

This policy has been adapted from the Cancer Council Sample SunSmart policy and procedures for early childhood. For further details, visit SunSmart in schools and early childhood | Cancer Council Australia

The service is committed to providing a child-safe environment where children's safety, well-being, rights, and best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions, and practices. Any concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing will be responded to in accordance with the service's Child Protection and Child Safe Environment policies.

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require policies and procedures to be in place in relation to sun protection.

The sun's UV can't be seen or felt. Whatever the weather, it is important for people of all skin types to use sun protection whenever UV levels are three or higher.

High levels of UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70. Children up to 4 years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower melanin levels 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.

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

Strategies / How will it be done?

Outdoor Activity

UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements. A combination of sun protection measures will be used whenever **the UV Index reaches 3 or higher**. These measures include:

- **Slip** on clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- **Slop** on sunscreen
- **Slap** on a hat
- **Seek** shade

Sun protection requirements will form part of all excursion and regular outing risk assessments. Educators will consider UV forecasts, shade availability, access to drinking water, sunscreen reapplication, protective clothing, hats, and the timing of activities. Where UV levels are high or extreme, activities may be modified, relocated, or rescheduled to minimise risk.

Shade

- Outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas wherever possible.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- Children are encouraged to wear bucket or wide brimmed hats and appropriate clothing. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun.

- In consultation with the service's committee, shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades to the service's outdoor space.
- The program will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- The service will provide and maintain adequate shade for outdoor play.
- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- Regular shade assessments will be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and quality of shade.
- Shade assessments will be reviewed following environmental changes, playground modifications, severe weather events, or where observations identify areas of inadequate protection from UV exposure.
- Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify and minimise sun safety risks, including consideration of UV exposure during outdoor play, excursions, transitions, special events, and changes to the outdoor environment.

When UV levels reach **8 or above**, educators will minimise children's time in direct sunlight and, where practicable, reschedule outdoor activities to cooler periods of the day or utilise shaded environments. When UV levels are **extreme (11+)**, outdoor activities will be carefully risk-assessed and may be relocated indoors.

Hats

- Educators, staff and children are required to wear SunSmart hats that protect their face, neck and ears. A SunSmart hat is:
    - Legionnaire hat;
    - Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm);
    - Broad-brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).
- Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and are not considered a suitable alternative.
- Children without a SunSmart hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

Clothing

- When outdoors, educators, staff and children will wear SunSmart clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. This includes wearing:
    - Loose-fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered necklines;
    - Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing SunSmart clothing are encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors) or are provided with spare clothing and wide brim hat.

- Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Sunscreen

- All staff and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours or as required while in the outdoor environment and prior to going outside later in the day.
- Parents to apply children's sunscreen prior to or on arrival and staff to support reapplying during the day as above.
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged and supported to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of staff.
- Permission to apply sunscreen is included in the service enrolment form. If children have allergies or sensitivities to sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative SPF 50 sunscreen, labelled with their name from a pharmacy.
- All sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place, and the expiry date is monitored.

Education

- Sun protection is incorporated regularly into learning programs and role-modelled by educators.
- SunSmart Global UV App lists the time UV is above 3. These times are promoted to guide the behaviour of staff, parents and children.
- Educators are encouraged to complete Cancer Council's free Generation SunSmart online learning modules.
- Children are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the service, including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection (e.g. accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen).
- Visitor, student and new employee inductions embed the transfer of information relating to the service's Sun Protection Policy.
- Educators and staff will receive information, training, and updates regarding sun protection requirements, risk management strategies, and their responsibilities under this policy.

Risk Assessments

The service will conduct regular sun protection risk assessments to identify and minimise risks associated with UV exposure. Risk assessments will consider outdoor learning environments, excursions, transitions, special events, water play, sports activities, shade availability, and periods of high or extreme UV levels. Control measures will be implemented and reviewed to ensure children, educators, volunteers and visitors are protected from excessive UV exposure.

Information and policy availability

- *Sun Protection* policy, procedures, requirements and updates are made available to staff, families and visitors.
- Sun protection information and resources are accessible and communicated regularly to families.
- All parents/families are informed of the *Sun Protection* policy including appropriate hat, clothing and sunscreen requirements on enrolling their child in the service.

Workplace Health and Safety

As part of WHS UV staff and visitors:

- Wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses
- Apply sunscreen and
- Seek shade whenever possible.

Sun protection considerations and actions are included in risk assessments for excursions and excursion checklists.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	• Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff follow the sun protection policy and procedures. • Ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play. • Ensure access to an adequate supply of sunscreen for children, educators and staff. • Ensure staff dress code/uniform includes sun protective clothing and hats. • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible and available to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families. • Ensure families are aware of, and agree to, support the service's sun protection policy and procedures.
Nominated Supervisor	• Ensure sun protection information is promoted to all staff, children, families and visitors. • Promote physical activity and active play while being SunSmart • Schedule outdoor activities away from times when the UV levels are most damaging • Provide support and advice to all staff with regard to the implementation of the Sun Protection Policy. • Implement the *sun protection* policy and procedures as outlined in the document. • Monitor the daily sun protection times for their location. • Support the implementation of sun protection measures during the sun protection times.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Early Childhood Educators	• Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Sun Protection Policy. • Educators and staff will act as role models and demonstrate SunSmart behaviour by: * Wearing a SunSmart hat (see *Hats*). * Wearing protective clothing and sunglasses (if practical) (see *Clothing*). * Applying SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every 2 hours or as required while in the outdoor environment and prior to going outside later in the day (see Sunscreen). * Using and promoting the use of shade. • Encouraging families and visitors to role model positive sun safe behaviours when at the service. • Access and display the local sun protection times via the UV widget - SunSmart free https://www.sunsmart.com.au/resources/sunsmart-app, Home - MyUV | MyUV, or the Bureau of Meteorology website. Displayed on posters visible for families or on tv in foyer. • Discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service. • Ensure that when outdoor activities are scheduled at times when the UV Index is forecast to be three (3) and above, maximum use of shade, sun protective hats, clothing and sunscreen should be applied to protect children and all stakeholders.
Families	• Dressing their child in cool clothing which covers as much skin as possible (e.g. tops that cover the shoulders, arms and chest, collared shirts, longer style shorts). • Providing a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears (e.g. wide brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style). • Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen supplied by the service to all exposed parts of my child's skin, including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs, or • Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum sunscreen (that is labelled with the child/children's name) to all exposed parts of the child's skin including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs. This sunscreen will be kept at the service and it is the responsibility of the family to make sure there is always an adequate supply available. • Practising SunSmart behaviours when at the service.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every two years.

> Sun protection practices, shade provision, incident trends relating to heat or sun exposure, and family feedback will be reviewed as part of the service's continuous improvement processes.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice – Standards 1.1, 1.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment – Standards 3.1, 3.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Standards 4.1, 4.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children – Standards 5.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standards 6.1, 6.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standards 7.1

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 100, 113, 114, 116, 168(2)(a)(ii), 169, 170, 171, 172
- Model WHS laws, 2011

Relevant documents

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) V2.0 2022 www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf

- ACECQA Sun protection policy and procedure guidelines (August 2021) www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/SunProtectionGuidelines.pdf
- Be SunSmart, Play SunSmart www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/schools-early-childhood/be-sunsmart-play-sunsmart.pdf
- Suggested learning experiences for sun protection www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/schools-early-childhood/education-resources/early-childhood-resources/learning-experiences

Last review date	Changes made	Next review date
October 2026	Displaying daily UV rating for the families on posters or TV in foyer. Staff to complete Cancer Council's free Generation SunSmart online learning modules. Small changes to wording.	October 2027
June 2026	Reflect the child safety changes 2025/26	June 2027
May 2023	Small additions to wording included in policy, taking out non-relevant information	May 2025
September 2022	Policy reviewed by Cancer Council's SunSmart Program for all states/territories. Additional information re: Sun Protection times for each state/territory added small additions to wording	September 2023

Sources

- Sun protection advice for parents and carers
  www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/parents-carers
- Sun protection information for babies and toddlers
  www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/resources/info-sheets/sun-protection-babies-toddlers-info-sheet.pdf
- Sun protection information in different languages
  www.sunsmart.com.au/publications-posters/?keyword=&type=Brochures+%26+booklets,&category=Early%20childhood,&language=
- Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood (Section 2) 2009
  www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
  www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards
- Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) (2019)
  www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2001/guide-exposure-solar-ultraviolet-radiation_1.pdf
- AS 4174:2018 (Amd 2019) Knitted and woven shade fabrics
- AS/NZS 1067.1:2016 (Amd 2021), Eye and face protection - Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
- AS 4399:2020, Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification
- AS/NZS 2604:2021 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
- United Nations. 1989. “Convention on the Rights of the Child.” Treaty Series 1577 (November): 3 - Australian Government Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) – Australian regulatory guidelines for sunscreens