



Sun Protection

Purpose

This policy will provide:

- Guidelines for the protection of children, staff and others participating in St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre programs and activities to help them maintain a healthy balance between too little and too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun
- Educative information for parents/guardians, staff, participants and children attending the St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre regarding a healthy balance between too little and too much UV radiation.

Policy statement

1. Values

St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre is committed to:

- Providing all centre participants with protection from the harmful effects caused by too much exposure to the sun's UV radiation during all aspects of the program
- Educating children, parents/guardians and other participants in the centre on the harmful effects of too much exposure to the sun's UV radiation
- Ensuring children receive a healthy balance between too little and too much UV radiation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff, committee, children, parents/guardians, visitors, students on placement, volunteers and any other person participating in programs provided at St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre.

This policy will apply from the beginning of September until the end of April. Particular care will be taken during the middle of the day, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during daylight saving time), when UV Index levels reach their peak.

Sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above.

3. Background and legislation

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Too much exposure to UV radiation causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first fifteen years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of skin cancer.

It is a requirement under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* that employers provide a healthy and safe environment for all persons who access the service's facilities and/or programs. This may include endorsing and implementing a Sun protection policy.

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

Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ECSNR)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Part 2: Principles for children)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Health and Safety Act 2004.

4. Definitions

Clothing for sun protection: Loose-fitting, close-weave clothing that 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 enough protection in the sun. If these are worn, a T-shirt or shirt should be worn over the top when going outside.

Shade: An area sheltered from direct and indirect sun, such as a large tree, canopy or artificial cover.

Sunscreen: SPF 30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.

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

Sunhat/head covering providing sun protection: To 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 centre policies

Sources

- The Cancer Council Victoria's SunSmart Early Childhood Program
- National Childcare Accreditation Council
 - DEECD, *Children's Services Guidelines*, accessed via www.education.vic.gov.au
 - DEECD, *Outdoor Play Guide for Victorian Children's Services*
 - 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

Centre policies

- Incursions and centre events
- Hygiene
- Occupational health and safety
- Supervision

Procedures

The committee is responsible for:

- Requesting families to provide children with an appropriate sun-protective hat when attending the centre during the day, this should be their school hat for after school care.
- Requesting children wear appropriate sun-protective clothing when attending the centre on a non-uniform day
- Requesting staff to act as role models by wearing sun-protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside, applying sunscreen and seeking shade whenever possible
- Providing appropriate spare hats for the children and adults that will be laundered after each use
- Providing a supply of sunscreen for use on all persons to whom this policy applies
- Reinforcing this policy through providing information to new users of the centre, and through newsletters, noticeboard displays and meetings
- Ensuring there is sufficient shade that provides shelter from direct and indirect sun on the centre grounds
- Considering the availability of shade when planning outdoor events
- Ensuring the policy is up to date with current SunSmart recommendations

- Ensuring that all persons are provided with a high level of sun protection from September to April, during the hours of operation.
- Informing parents/guardians of the Sun protection policy in the guidelines document provided at enrolment

The staff are responsible for:

- Taking all reasonable precautions for their own health and safety
- Cooperating with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Acting as role models when participating in the program by wearing a sun-protective hat, clothing and sunglasses when outside, applying sunscreen and seeking shade whenever possible
- Ensuring that their program planning includes the application of a combination of sun protection measures during outdoor time, with particular care taken between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. (11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. during daylight saving time) when UV levels reach their peak
- Reminding children and providing sunscreen for all children and ensuring they apply it to their exposed skin at least 20 minutes before going outdoors
- Encouraging other adult participants in the program to apply sunscreen and to wear a sun-protective hat
- Ensuring each child, and any other participant at the centre, wears their appropriate sunhat and clothing for all outdoor activities during their attendance at the centre from the start of September to the end of April
- Ensuring that the children's sunhats are stored in their bags, individual pegs or in individual lockers
- Encouraging children to seek shade when playing outside
- Including education in the children's program on the sun, skin and ways to protect skin using SunSmart's recommended 'SunSmart Countdown' (see [Attachment 2](#), 'General information')
- Ensuring spare hats are laundered after each use
- Utilising shaded areas including the hall for outside activities on sunny days

The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Providing a named SunSmart approved hat or school hat (refer to [Attachment 2](#)), with cords removed or shortened to prevent choking, that provides adequate sun protection for their child to use at the centre
- Providing, at their own expense, an alternative sunscreen to be left at the centre (not in their child's bag), if their child has a particular sensitivity to the sunscreen provided by the centre
- Acting as role models when on duty or participating in the program by wearing a sun-protective hat, clothing and sunglasses (if possible) when outside, applying sunscreen and seeking shade whenever possible.

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues covered by this policy
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parents'/guardians' survey
- Take into account feedback from staff regarding the policy
- Monitor compliance, complaints and incidents regarding the operation of the Sun protection policy
- Keep updated with current legislation and research.

Attachments

[Attachment 1](#): General information

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre committee of management at a committee meeting on **18th Oct 2016**.

Review date: October 2018

Attachment 1 - General information

The sun—ultraviolet radiation

The rate of skin cancer in Australia is very high. Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. The damage done to the skin from even one episode of overexposure to the sun can never be repaired. Sun exposure in the first fifteen years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of skin cancer. Babies under twelve months should be kept out of the direct sun.

You can see sunlight and feel heat (infra-red radiation), but you cannot see or feel UV radiation. It can be damaging to skin on cool, cloudy days and hot, sunny days.

UV radiation comes directly from the sun. It can also be scattered in the air and reflected by surfaces, such as buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water. UV radiation can also pass through light cloud.

‘Correct sun protection practices not only reduce a child’s risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer but also ensure they obtain enough vitamin D from the sun to allow for healthy bone development and maintenance.’

The SunSmart UV Alert and the UV Index is a rating system that indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reaches the earth’s surface. It ranges from low (UV Index of 1–2) to extreme (11 and above).

Whenever UV Index levels reach 3 (moderate) and above, sun protection is needed because that is when UV radiation can damage the skin and eyes and lead to skin cancer. In Victoria, average UV Index levels are 3 and above from the beginning of September until the end of April. Particular care should be taken between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during daylight saving time) when UV Index levels reach their peak.

To see what the UV levels are for the day and the times that sun protection is needed, go to SunSmart UV Alert in the weather section of your daily newspaper or visit www.sunsmart.com.au or www.bom.gov.au/announcements/uv/.

From May to August, average UV Index levels in Victoria are usually low (1–2). When UV Index levels are low, the SunSmart UV Alert will say, ‘No UV Alert’ and sun protection is not required, unless you are in alpine regions or near highly reflective surfaces like snow or water.

Adapted from Sun Protection for Early Childhood Services, SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Program Fact Sheet

The role of childhood educators

Educators can play a significant role by creating sun-safe environments and changing behaviours through role-modelling and education. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, which refers to a duty of care to both staff and students, UV radiation is most commonly classified as ‘high risk’ from September to April in Victoria. A service must therefore make it a high priority to put appropriate measures in place for both students and staff to effectively control this high risk.

When the UV Index level reaches 3 and above, use *the SunSmart Outside 5 Countdown*

5. Slip on some sun-protective clothing—that covers as much skin as possible.

SunSmart recommends children wear loose-fitting, close-weave clothing that covers as much of their skin as possible when outdoors. Tops with elbow-length sleeves and, if possible, collars and knee-length or longer-style shorts and skirts are best. Garments especially designed for sun protection will carry a UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) level on their tags. The higher the number, the greater the protection from UV radiation. Fabric rated above UPF 30 provides very good protection.

4. Slop on SPF30+ sunscreen—make sure it is broad spectrum and water resistant.

Remind children to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply it every two hours when outdoors. Use sunscreen to protect areas that cannot be protected by clothing, such as the face and the backs

of hands. Sunscreen screens out UV radiation but does not completely block it out, so some UV radiation still reaches the skin. Sunscreen should never be the only method of sun protection.

If your service supplies sunscreen, inform families of the brand/type. Some children may be sensitive to some sunscreens, so families may wish to supply an alternative for their child. Even if all families are asked to provide SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, the service should still have a supply available. Always check the expiry date.

3. Slap on a hat—that protects the face, head, neck and ears

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

- Broad-brimmed hats should have a brim of at least 7.5 centimetres. The brim width for children under ten should be proportional to the size of the child's head and ensure that their face is well shaded.
- 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 6 centimetres (5 centimetres for young children).
- Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck and are therefore not recommended

2. Seek 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.

1. Slide on some sunglasses—make sure they meet Australian Standards

Where practical, children should wear 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 (eye protection factor) 10. There are sunglasses available that have been specifically designed for babies and toddlers, and have soft elastic to keep them in place. If your service prefers not to introduce the wearing of sunglasses, or a child is reluctant to wear them, you can still protect their eyes by avoiding peak UV times, wearing a hat and staying in the shade.

Role models

Children often copy those around them and learn by imitation. If you adopt sun-protection behaviours, the children in your care are more likely to do the same.

Sun exposure for staff is also an Occupational health and safety issue. For information on sun protection in the workplace, contact SunSmart on (03) 9635 5148.

Family information

It is helpful if families understand the centre'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 and noticeboards are an ideal way of keeping families informed. The above information could be displayed on the noticeboard or provided in a newsletter.

SunSmart can provide materials (posters, brochures and information sheets) for this purpose. Their website also has useful information. Visit www.sunsmart.com.au. This includes frequently asked questions from early childhood centres.

UV and Vitamin D

Some UV radiation exposure is important for a child's vitamin D production. Vitamin D is necessary for bone, joint, muscle and neurological function and is produced in the skin by exposure to UV radiation. Low levels are also present in some foods.

A balance is required between avoiding an increase in a child's risk of skin cancer and achieving enough UV radiation exposure to maintain their vitamin D levels.

During peak UV months in Victoria (from September to April), children usually receive enough sun for Vitamin D production from incidental sun exposure during their day-to-day activities, even if they are adopting recommended SunSmart behaviour. A few minutes of sun exposure in the morning and a few minutes in the late afternoon on most days of the week are generally all that is required. Extra care should always be taken during the middle of the day, when UV Index levels reach their peak. Children with very dark skin may need three to six times more exposure time. From May until August, UV Index levels in Victoria reach below 3 (low). Generally the lower UV Index levels are not intense enough to damage the skin.

When UV Index levels are low, children need greater exposure time to maintain vitamin D stores. Asking children to follow sun protection throughout the entire year in Victoria is not necessary and may lead to other health concerns for them.

Please contact SunSmart for further information and for a special note regarding children with very dark skin.

To make sure children are well protected from UV radiation when it is strong enough to damage the skin think:

From September, 5 things to remember! (The Outside 5)

And to get enough vitamin D when UV radiation levels are low and sun protection isn't necessary think:

From May, put sunhats away!

Resource

SunSmart Early Childhood Program
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