



## SunSmart Schools and Services Program (ACT) Sample Policy and Checklist.

### Background information to help develop your sun protection policy

#### The sun – UV radiation

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.

While UV radiation comes directly from the sun, it can also be scattered and reflected by surfaces such as buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water. It can also pass through certain cloud cover. Whenever UV radiation levels reach **3** (moderate) or above sun protection is required. At that level UV radiation is intense enough to damage our skin and contribute to the risk of skin cancer. In Canberra from the beginning of August through to the end of May, daily UV radiation levels average **3** or above for part of or most of the day. Particular care should also be taken between 10am - 2pm **(including minimising outdoor activities between 11am - 3 pm during the daylight saving time of the year)** when daily UV levels reach their peak.

During June and July in Canberra, UV radiation levels are low (below **3**). Therefore sun protection measures are not necessary during these months unless you are in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces like snow or water or have very sensitive skin and spend long hours outdoors. 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 effect of UV radiation – skin cancer

Too much exposure to UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin damage and skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world and one in two people living in Australia will develop skin cancer during their lifetime. However skin cancer is almost totally preventable.

#### The role of early childhood services and schools

There is enormous potential for services and schools to prevent skin cancer in future generations. Childcare services and schools are central to protecting children's skin. This is because:

- Children are at centres/schools five days out of seven at times when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are high
- Most damage due to sun exposure occurs during the first 15 years.

Staff teachers and carers can play a significant role in changing behaviours through role modelling and education. Protecting children from foreseeable harm is part of a centre's/school's 'duty of care' to children. Early childhood services and schools are subject to guidelines and responsibilities that

relate to the health and safety of children, staff and visitors. As part of an employer's general duty of care, the Work Safety Act 2008 states that any staff working all or part of their day outside must be protected from the sun's UV radiation.

## So remember:

**The 1<sup>st</sup> of August is hats ON for all of us.**

## And:

**The 31st of May is hats OFF day.**

**When UV levels reach 3 and above adopt a combination of the 5 sun protection measures**

### DO The 'Outside 5'

To protect against skin and eye damage including skin cancer, when the UV level is 3 and above simply adopt a combination of these 5 sun protection measures whenever you are outside and don't forget to take particular care between 10am - 2pm (including minimising outdoor activities between 11am - 3 pm during daylight savings time).

#### 1. SHADE

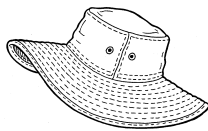
Try to use shade whenever possible. Even while in the shade, UV radiation can reflect from surfaces such as water, sand and concrete so it is important that children continue to wear a hat, appropriate clothing and sunscreen.

#### 2. SUN PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

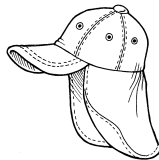
As well as hats, SunSmart recommends loose fitting, close weave clothing that covers as much skin as possible during outside activities. Make sure your service/school uniform or dress code includes tops with elbow length sleeves or longer, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts. Chose dark and close knitted material that offers more protection.

#### 3. HATS

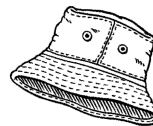
To protect the neck, ears, temples, face and nose, children should wear a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat.



*broad-brimmed hat*



*legionnaire hat*



*bucket hat*

Broad-brimmed hats should have a brim of at least 7.5cm

Legionnaire hats 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 5cm. 6cm for older kids going into primary school.

Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck and are therefore not recommended.

#### 4. SUNGLASSES

Eyes, like skin, can also be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. SunSmart recommends, where practical, wearing close fitting, wrap around sunglasses that cover as much of the eyes 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 also swimming goggles with EPF 10. A wrap-around style offers best protection.

Please remember that the colour or darkness of the lenses doesn't indicate the level of sun protection and you will need to check the label. It is also good to find sunglasses that are polarised as these reduce the glare.

If your centre prefers not to introduce the wearing of sunglasses, or a student is reluctant to wear them, you can still protect the eyes by minimising or avoiding peak UV times, wearing a hat and staying in the shade.

#### 5. SUNSCREEN

It is good to teach children to apply a 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 15-20 minutes before going outside and to reapply it every two hours. Sunscreen 'screens' out UV radiation but does not completely 'block' it out so some UV radiation still reaches our skin. Sunscreen should never be the only method of sun protection nor should it be used to stay out in the sun longer. Always check the expiry date. If your service / school supplies sunscreen, we recommend that you 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. You may also like to include sunscreen on the schools booklist so that each child brings their own supply approved by their family. Even if all families are asked to provide 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, the centre should still have a supply available.

#### **WHEN THE UV LEVEL REACHES THREE AND ABOVE, USE THE *OUTSIDE 5***

Whenever UV radiation levels are **3** and above, skin damage can occur. **The SunSmart UV Alert** is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when the UV Index is forecast to reach **3** and above. It is reported in most daily newspapers and some television and radio weather forecasts across Australia.

In Canberra, from the beginning of August to the end of May, UV radiation levels are on average **3 and above** for part of or most of the day. Particular care should always be taken between 10am - 2pm (including minimising outdoor activities between 11am- 3 pm during daylight savings time) when daily UV levels reach their peak. If possible, try to have outdoor activities or events earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, or try using indoor venues.

#### **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. It's important to use a combination of the 5 sun protection measures during day care hours and at home and on the weekend. Encourage parents and carers to also be SunSmart!

Sun exposure for staff is also an Occupational Health & Safety issue. For information on sun protection in the workplace visit [www.actcancer.org](http://www.actcancer.org)

## **FAMILY INFORMATION**

It is helpful if families understand the centre's/school's sun protection policy and are aware of how they can assist by supporting the dress code, providing appropriate hats, and possibly sunglasses and sun-screen, and being good role models themselves. Newsletters, assemblies and noticeboards are an ideal way of keeping parents and carers informed.

Cancer Council ACT can provide materials (posters, brochures and information sheets) for this purpose. Alternatively you can also visit the SunSmart section of the Council's website at [www.actcancer.org](http://www.actcancer.org)

It is important to have a review date on your policy so that reviewing your sun protection policy becomes a regular part of your centre's/ school's review program. This makes sure everything is working well and the policy includes the most current information. A Policy Review Form will be forwarded to your service/school.

## **A Sample Policy**

*CENTRES AND SCHOOLS ARE WELCOME TO COPY THIS SUNSMART SUN PROTECTION POLICY DIRECTLY AND USE IT AS THEIR OWN OR INCORPORATE ALL OF THE MAIN POINTS INTO THEIR OWN SUN PROTECTION POLICY.*

### **(name of centre's/school's) sun protection policy**

#### **Rationale**

Too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. This policy is followed from the beginning of August until the end of May when UV radiation is on average 3 and above for part of or most of the day and intense enough to damage unprotected skin in Canberra. The following statement should be acknowledged in your policy.

*'Most Australians receive the bulk of their vitamin D supply from exposing their skin to small amounts of ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Due to low levels of ultraviolet radiation in Canberra during the winter months, The Cancer Council ACT does not generally recommend sun protection in June and July. This is to reduce the risk of vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region.'*

#### **Objectives**

The goals of the SunSmart Policy are to;

- Increase children's and the community's awareness about skin cancer and sun protection,
- Encourage all staff and teachers of the service/school to act as positive SunSmart role models by using a combination of the 5 sun protection measures from August 1st to the end of May.
- Work towards developing the safest environment that provides shade for children, staff and the visitors to the centre or school
- Assist and educate children to be responsible for their own sun protection behaviour.
- Incorporate educational activities about sun protection and skin damage
- Actively promote the policy to all members of the service/ school.

## Our Sun Protection strategies

All children/students and staff will adopt a combination of the 5 sun protection measures when UV levels reach **3 and above**. Particular care will be taken between 10am - 2pm (including minimising outdoor activities between 11am-3 pm during daylight savings time) when daily UV levels reach their peak.

Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events eg. assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events. Outdoor activities should be minimised when possible during the daylight saving period of the year.

### 1. Shade

Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or to remain inside if shade is not adequate.

The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities.

The centre/school will make sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the play ground, particularly in areas where children congregate. Eg play areas, sand pits and grass etc. If there is not sufficient shade the service/school is committed to work toward increasing shade for future use.

### 2. Clothing

Sun protective clothing is included in our centre's dress code. This will include shirts with collars and longer sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming. Clothing should be loose fitting and a closely woven fabric.

### 3. Hats

Children and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hats whenever they are outside. Baseball hats are not recommended.

### 4. Sunglasses [SUGGESTED]

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

### 5. Sunscreen

SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and children's use. Sunscreen is applied at least 15-20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outside for long periods. It is preferable that babies are kept out of direct sun exposure. Whilst there is no evidence that suggest that sunscreen is harmful to babies, it need only be used occasionally and on very small areas of exposed baby's skin

**Note: Sunscreen should never be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.**

**Role Modelling**

Staff , teachers and parents alike should be encouraged to act as positive role models by:

- wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses (if possible) outside
- applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and seeking shade whenever possible.

Families are encouraged to use sun protective measures (sun protective clothing, hats and sunscreen) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

**Curriculum**

SunSmart messages are incorporated into the curriculum.

SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the community through newsletters, centre's homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, fun days, concerts, assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment. Etc

**Review**

The Cancer Council ACT will forward all centres and schools that have received a national SunSmart status a **SunSmart Review Form** every two (ECC services) or 3 years (primary schools). By assessing and recommending any necessary changes to your policy, your centre will be assured it has the most comprehensive, updated and effective sun protection policy possible to protect the children, students and staff in your care. It also adds consistency and integrity to the Cancer Council's National SunSmart Program.

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**For further information call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20**

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PO BOX 143, Fyshwick ACT 2609

Tel: 02 6257 9999 · Fax: 02 6257 5055 · [www.actcancer.org](http://www.actcancer.org)

**Policy objectives – Checklist**  
**Your policy should include the minimal standards:**



- ✓ Policy is implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> August until the 31<sup>st</sup> May, with particular care taken between 10am and 2 pm (minimise outdoor activities between 11am and 3pm day-light saving time). Due to Canberra’s low UV levels during June and July (under 3) sun protection is not recommended. This is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region
- ✓ Policy is reflected in the planning of ALL outdoor events / activities, camps and carnivals.
- ✓ Babies (under 12 months) should be kept out of direct sunlight. Sunscreen need only be applied to exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats, where necessary (applies only to early childhood services and schools)
- ✓ Broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hats *only* are required to be worn outdoors
- ✓ Sun protective clothing is included in the dress code
- ✓ Children without hats or adequate clothing will be directed to play in shaded/inside areas
- ✓ Children are encouraged to use shaded areas for outdoor activities
- ✓ A combination of the 5 sun protection measures are considered when planning ALL outdoor experiences.
- ✓ Your policy acknowledges your schools/services OH&S responsibilities and duty of care
- ✓ The staff/ committee will ensure there is appropriate shade at the centre
- ✓ The application of SPF 30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is included
- ✓ Staff and parents are encouraged to act as positive SunSmart role-models
- ✓ Education on sun protection is included in games, stories and curriculum etc
- ✓ The SunSmart message is promoted to all staff and families
- ✓ Policy review points are included. Your policy is reviewed (2 to 3 years) and updated if necessary.
- ✓ Sunglasses are acknowledged in the policy. (meet AS 1067)

**YOUR APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

Please make sure your application includes:

- ✓ SunSmart Program Application Form
- ✓ Signed SunSmart Program Agreement
- ✓ Copy of your centre’s/school’s current sun protection policy (email in doc format)