

RATIONALE

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in this world with 950,000 new cases and over 2,000 deaths recorded each year. At least two out of three Australians will develop skin cancer before the age of 70.

There are three factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to these statistics:

- Ultraviolet light from the sun is of sufficient intensity to damage skin for much of the year in South Australia.
- For most of this century, social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy & attractive.
- Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Most of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable.

Preschools can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the Preschool community to take effective skin-protection measures.

Temperature does not affect UV radiation levels, so even on cool, cloudy days UV radiation levels can be damaging.

AIMS

The aims of the SunSmart Policy are to promote among students, educators and parents:

- Positive attitudes toward skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for the decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in Preschools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR SKIN PROTECTION

This policy is for implementation throughout the year whenever the UV level is 3 and above. When the UV is below 3, no sun protection is required to achieve adequate vitamin D from the sunlight. Vitamin D is vital for the development and maintenance of strong, healthy bones.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all children attending our Preschool are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

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AS PART OF GENERAL SKIN-PROTECTION STRATEGIES:

- Children will be encouraged to wear hats when the UV index is 3 or above and it is an expectation that hats are kept at Preschool year round. Educators will check the UV index on a daily basis and inform children if they need to wear a hat. Children and supervising adults will wear hats whenever they are outdoors in Preschool hours (including sport, sports carnivals, outdoor excursions and activities). Hats which protect the face, neck and ears will be strongly recommended [information handout available].
- Children who do not have their hats with them will be provided with a hat. Parents will be expected to return the hat freshly laundered.
- The Preschool has a number of shaded areas as part of outdoors play. We use the shade of trees, pergolas, and umbrellas whenever outdoors and children will be encouraged to use shade when at Preschool whenever the UV is 3 and above.
- Outdoor activities will be adapted when the temperature reaches 36 degrees (see School Inclement Weather Policy).
- Extra care will be taken during the peak UV radiation times (across the middle of the day) and outdoor activities will be scheduled outside of these times where possible.
- A hand towel or flannel which can be dampened to assist body cooling is available from the site to assist with heat stress from infrared (heat) radiation and a container of cool water should be brought by each child throughout the year.
- Families should ensure that SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen has been applied to their child before the start of the session in Terms 1, 3 and 4. Children in the Preschool will have access to SPF 30+ sunscreen and will be supported to apply 20 minutes prior to going outdoors. Sunscreen will be reapplied every two hours and more often if outdoors for extended periods or during water activities. Families should supply their own SPF30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen if their child has sensitivities to specific sunscreens.
- On the preschool consent forms there is a question regarding the application of sunscreen. Educators will only support children's application of sunscreen if this has been signed by a Parent/Caregiver.
- Reinforcing the SunSmart message in all service activities and in general service procedures is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours. Educators and visitors will be encouraged to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies in all service activities including wearing appropriate hats, sun protective clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses when outdoors.
- Skin cancer prevention and sun protection will be included in age-appropriate teaching activities and posters promoting UV and heat protection will be displayed in prominent positions around the preschool.
- Educators will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources from Cancer Council SA via sunsmart.org.au
- Information about the centre's SunSmart Policy will be given to all new Educators, children and families and SunSmart behaviour will be reinforced and promoted to the whole community (e.g. via newsletters).

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HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR SUN PROTECTION

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING FOR STUDENTS

- Hats which shade the **face, back of neck and ears** when in the sun. Broad (at least 7.5cm), stiffened, brim hats made of a close weave material which "breathes" and with a dark coloured under brim is ideal. A Bucket or surfie style hat should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be at least 6cm and provide the face, neck and ears with good protection from the sun. Legionnaire style hats should have a flap that covers the neck and meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face. Baseball caps and sun visors are NOT recommended as they leave the ears and back of neck exposed. [Information handout available]
- Loose, closely woven cotton fabrics are ideal. Clothing that covers the shoulders. Tops with collars and elbow-length sleeves and longer-style shorts/skirts/dresses are preferred. Children will be provided with appropriate clothing if they are not adequately protected from the sun.
- Children are able to wear sunglasses to Preschool. Sunglasses with a high **eye protection factor (EPF)** (scale is 1-10, therefore glasses with an EPF of 9-10 are highly recommended) and which meet Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003 (Sunglasses: lens category 2, 3 or 4).

The Kilkenny Preschool Sun Smart Policy will be evaluated regularly (at least every three years) to ensure the policy remains current and relevant. Policy issues will be discussed at Educators and parent meetings.

Reviewed March 2020~~17~~

Educators will use the Australian Government [Bureau of Meteorology](#) website or [SunSmart app](#) to check the daily UV index and sun protection times.

See example below noting that the UV levels and sun protection times change and should be checked daily.

