UV Protection Policy

Southern Cross Early Childhood School has been a member of the National SunSmart Schools Program since August 2009

AIMS

This policy aims to ensure that Southern Cross Early Childhood School effectively implements behavioural, environmental and organisational strategies that protect children and staff from the harmful effects associated with over-exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

The policy aims to promote among children, staff and families:

- Awareness of the need for sun protection and appropriate personal, environmental and organisational sun protection practices.
- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Responsible decision making about skin protection.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy was implemented at the beginning of February 2014. A combination of the 5 sun protection measures will be considered when planning all outdoor activities and events. Sun protection will be enforced when UV levels reach 3 and above, so for part or most of each day except in June and July.

1. Scheduling of activities

- Minimise outdoor activities and events as much as reasonably practicable between 11am and 3pm during the daylight saving time of the year (that is, terms 1 and 4).
- When outdoors between 11am and 3pm during the daylight saving time, children and staff will be required to seek shaded areas whenever possible.
- When planning outdoor activities including carnivals, camps and excursions, the combination of the following 5 sun protection measures will be considered and adopted when UV levels reach 3 and above:

  - Slip on sun protective clothing
  - Slop on SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
  - Slap on a hat
  - Seek shade
  - Slide on some sunnies.
2. Shade

All staff members and children will be encouraged to use available shade whenever in outdoor learning environments.

3. Clothing, hats and sunglasses

- Children and staff will wear clothing that protects as much skin as possible.
- Children and staff will be expected to wear a broad-brimmed hat, legionnaire style hat, or bucket hat with a deep crown that provides sun protection for the face, neck and ears, whenever they are involved in outdoor learning activities. Southern Cross Early Childhood School has a No Hat, Play in the Shade policy. Children not wearing an appropriate hat or adequate clothing will be expected to play in the shade provided in their outdoor learning environments.
- Children are encouraged to wear the Southern Cross Early Childhood School clothes which consist of shirts with high necks and at least elbow length sleeves and longer style shorts/skirts.
- Children and staff are encouraged to wear sunglasses in outdoor learning environments. Sunglasses should meet Australian Standard 1067 and display an EPF 10, which provides 100% protection. Close fitting, wrap around style sunglasses are recommended as they offer best protection.

4. Sunscreen

Children are encouraged (and assisted if necessary) by their educators to apply water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with at least an SPF of 30+ to clean, dry skin, 15-20 minutes before going outdoors.

- Sunscreen and full length mirrors for application, are available to children and their educators in all classrooms in the school. Adequate time will be allowed for application of sunscreen on children before they go outdoors.
- Sunscreen will be reapplied every two hours or more frequently if the children are involved with water play or are perspiring.
- Sunscreen will not be used to extend time outdoors.
- Families will be encouraged to supply sunscreen for their children, although the school will also provide a supply of ‘spare’ sunscreen in each classroom.
- Southern Cross Early Childhood School will inform and educate all families about the use of sunscreen at the school on enrolment and annually. Families will be required to notify the school if their child is allergic to sunscreen or if they do not wish sunscreen to be applied to their child.
- Children with naturally very dark skin will not be expected to apply sunscreen.

RATIONALE

Australia has amongst the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Over-exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major contributor to skin cancer later in life, including melanoma.

Over-exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major contributor to skin cancer later in life, including melanoma.

“Most Australians receive the bulk of their vitamin D supply from exposing their skin to small amounts of ultraviolet radiation found in sunlight. Due to ‘low’ levels of ultraviolet radiation in Canberra during the winter months, Cancer Council ACT does not generally recommend sun protection around the June and July period. This is to reduce the risk of vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region.” (Cancer Council ACT)
5. Education

Reinforcing the SunSmart message is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.

- Staff will be required to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies and as part of WH&S responsibilities.
- Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with the education service at Cancer Council ACT, for example, Kidskin, Generation SunSmart.
- Skin cancer prevention will be included in appropriate teaching activities.
- Southern Cross Early Childhood School will promote the SunSmart message to families through regular inserts in the school newsletter, enrolment, assemblies and on the school’s website including the SunSmart UV Alert and throughout the school etc.
- Parents, carers, grandparents and visitors to the school will be encouraged to act as positive SunSmart role models if participating in outdoor activities and events.

OCCUPATIONAL UVR EXPOSURE

The school has a duty of care to protect its staff as much as reasonably practicable from any foreseeable harm including occupational UVR exposure. Staff members are aware of their responsibilities when it comes to sun protection and will adopt a combination of the 5 sun protection measures when working outdoors when UV levels reach 3 and above.

6. Policy

This policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and formally reviewed at least once every three years by Cancer Council ACT. The policy will be updated if necessary to meet high national SunSmart standards. Southern Cross Early Childhood School will ensure that the policy is approved by the school board on each review.

- Policy issues will be discussed at staff and family meetings.
- This policy will be next reviewed by Cancer Council ACT in December 2016.
- For more information on the National SunSmart Schools Program visit: http://www.actcancer.org/sun-smart/primary.aspx