

Policy 2.9

SUN SAFE POLICY

A healthy balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with 1 out of 2 people developing some form of skin cancer in their lifetime. Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Much 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. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable.

AIM

The aims of Glandore Child Care Centre Sun Safe Policy are to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection
- Lifestyle practices, which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection
- Allow children to be exposed to the sun at times of low uv levels, so they can avoid Vitamin D deficiency.

Our Sunsmart Strategies

The centre owners have provided very extensive areas of certified high level, uv resistant shade cloth in the yard, and blinds in the baby yard. We also have large areas of completely shaded verandas. These procedures will be kept in place all year round when the UV level is 3 and above. These procedures definitely apply from the beginning of September to the end of April.

Vitamin D deficiency has been identified as a problem for the Australian population. To help to counteract this, staff and children may go outside without hats and sunscreen, if the UV level is below 3.

The purpose of these procedures is to protect all staff and children from skin damage that can be caused by the harmful rays of the sun. We also need to have a balance between sun protection, to lower the risk of skin cancer, and sun exposure for the production and maintenance of vitamin D. All staff members of Glandore Child Care Centre will be required to use the following procedures:

SUNSMART STRATEGIES

In South Australia UV levels are 3 and above every day from the **beginning of September until the end of April** making this the most important time for skin protection. **Children may not be in direct or indirect (eg under trees or shade cloth) sunlight between the hours of 10am to 3pm between the beginning of September, and the end of April (or 11am and 4pm during daylight saving).**

At other times of the year children may be in direct or indirect sunlight when the UV levels are below 3.

- Outdoor activity sessions may be held in the full shade **between the beginning of September, and the end of April between the hours above.**
- The children's lunch and rest time will be held during 12md and 2pm to avoid the hottest part of the day.
- Babies (Under 12months) will be kept out of the direct sun as much as possible.

Use the shade of the trees and pergola areas, whenever outside, as much as possible.

Wear appropriate clothing, which protects the skin.

- Children, staff and other adults are expected to wear a broad brimmed or legionnaire style hat, and sunscreen, **whenever** they are involved in outside activities between the beginning of September and the end of April.
- Children, staff and other adults should wear sun protective clothing, such as a T-shirt (ideally with a collar), or garment with an elbow length sleeve, longer shorts and skirts during outdoor play.
- If children wear singlet or strapped tops, they must wear a centre T-shirt before playing outdoors.
- We enforce the "No Hat, Play in the shaded areas only" policy, between September and April.
- Apply a broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30+, to clean, dry skin, 20 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply sunscreen every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time.
- Sunscreen must be applied in the morning before they go outside, and again in the afternoon.
- All school age children will be required to comply with this policy. They will be encouraged to apply their own sunscreen when required.

- Excursions will be planned as much as possible, to limit the exposure of children to the sun. Sunscreen must be reapplied to staff, children and volunteers, every 2 hours, particularly if children are involved in water activities (in this case the sunscreen should be water resistant). Children, staff and volunteers, must wear hats when outdoors on excursions at all times.

Staff reinforce the Sun Smart message in all centre activities/procedures. This is an important strategy in the adoption of the skin protection behaviours.

- Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate Sun Smart strategies in all centre activities, and apply sunscreen to themselves before going outdoors.
- Staff should use shaded areas outdoors as much as possible.
- Skin cancer protection will be included in appropriate teaching activities.
- Staff will keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with the Cancer Council South Australia Resource Centre.
- Parents will be informed of Sunsmart strategies, and messages about sun protection will be sent home in newsletters and pamphlets.

Babies' skin is thinner than adults' skin, and is extremely sensitive. It can burn easily from exposure to the sun. Babies can be at risk of sunburn even when they are in the shade.

- Babies up to 12 months will only use the outdoor area in front of their room. This area is protected with 80% UV protective blinds. Encourage parents to dress babies in T-shirts and clothing which will protect their skin from the sun. Apply baby formula sunscreen which is SPF30+ broad spectrum water resistant, to unprotected areas of their skin, such as face, ears, backs of hands, 20 minutes before going outside.
- Encourage babies to keep their hats on while outdoors. Hats should protect their neck, face and ears.

Parents are informed about our policy on enrolment and asked to purchase an appropriate hat. They are asked to give permission for the staff to apply sunscreen to their child. If the child cannot use our sunscreen, we ask that they supply and alternative. Staff, students, visiting teachers, and volunteers are also informed of our policy, and required to comply with it.

Sun smart behaviour will be regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole community. We will make information available, and reinforce the policy in newsletters. The Sun Safe Policy will be evaluated annually, with reference to current research.

References:

Consultations with Parents and staff from Glandore Child Care Centre.
 The Cancer Council of S.A. *Information for Early Childhood Centres*, obtained June 2011
 The Cancer Council of S.A. – www.cancersa.org.au accessed March 2012
 Australian College of Dermatologists www.dermcoll.asn.au accessed March 2012

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 Original Policy 1998
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