

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**  
**COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**SUN PROTECTION STATEMENT**

This statement is designed to assist all children and adults<sup>1</sup> (OH&S) whilst in attendance at the Centre to be sun smart and sun safe. This statement is developed around the information provided to the Centre from SunSmart Victoria. Children can choose to play outdoors, but they must be protected from over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR), which causes sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and, in the long term, skin cancer. The Cancer Council Victoria is stating that "Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of skin cancer." We as a community want to ensure that we reduce these risks as much as is practicable.

SunSmart Victoria states:

*"In Victoria, the sun's UV rays (the part of the sun which can damage the skin) are most intense from the beginning of September until the end of April especially during the middle of the day. From May to August, the UV radiation index levels in Victoria are usually low (Below 3). Therefore, sun protection measures are not necessary during these months unless you are in the alpine regions, or near highly reflective surfaces like snow or water."*

SunSmart Victoria suggests that children can be outdoors from September 1 to April 30 inclusive at any time. However, Centre Personnel do need to be mindful of the peak UV times (10.00am to 2.00 pm - EST and 11.00am to 3.00pm - Daylight Saving Time) and schedule activities accordingly. For example, concentrate activities in shaded areas and have breaks from the sun. Staff need to use their professional judgment.

**During this period the following sun protection measures must be taken:**

- Both children and adults must be protected from the sun, at all times, with sun protective hats and clothing, sunglasses (suggested) if possible and sunscreen (*Refer to Clothing Statement*).
- Babies under 12 months are kept in dense shade and out of direct sunlight e.g. under the UV shade structures, trees or shaded veranda areas - so adults can ensure that the infant's outdoor environment utilises as much dense shade as possible. Infants under 12 months of age must have exposed skin covered at all times however; it is acceptable to use sunscreen on the face and hands to protect exposed skin areas.
- The application of SPF 30+ broad spectrum **20 minutes before** going outside, to clean dry exposed skin of both children and staff is a requirement. Sunscreen will need to be re-applied every 2 hours (staff record the actual time each sunscreen application is applied for each child on the sign in & out document under the section titled 'Sunscreen AM /PM') or more often if children/adults are swimming or sweating a lot. The Centre's Enrolment package will include a section for families to sign to authorise the application of sunscreen every 2 hours during periods of peak UV radiation (index levels above 3) times.
- Children have the option of playing indoors or playing in the shade areas e.g. under the UV shade structures, trees or shaded veranda areas. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing and when suitable items cannot be accessed from the Centre's 'spares' are directed to play in the shaded areas protected from the sun e.g. under the UV shade structures, trees or shaded veranda areas.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES:**

It is important for parents to supply appropriate protective clothing, hat and sunscreen (30+ and *free of nut products*) for their child. This will assist in avoiding a possibly unhappy situation from occurring for both children and adults.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO STAFF (this includes volunteers and students on practicum):**

Some children may present with an allergic reaction to sunscreen. In this situation, staff will stop applying the sunscreen, notify the family and request that a hypo-allergenic or alternative sunscreen be supplied.

Staff must be positive role models and wear appropriate protective clothing, hat and sunscreen (30+), sunglasses (suggested) and seek shade wherever possible whilst outdoors. Children copy those around them and learn by imitation.

**Physical Environment (shade provision, outdoor play and outdoor equipment):**

The Children's Centre Committee ensures there are a sufficient number of shelters e.g. the UV shade structures, trees or

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<sup>1</sup> Adult – is defined as parents, families, staff, management, students and volunteers, regardless of age gender, who access the Children's Centre for any reason.

shaded veranda areas provided in each garden area; and continually assess the shade coverage of the outdoor play environment seeking avenues to improve the conditions if required. Staff are required to consider the availability of shade when planning for outdoor play experiences. Staff will ensure that outdoor equipment that is not fixed is utilized in the shade areas at all times of the day. Outdoor play equipment that is fixed will be monitored for usability (dependent upon shade) throughout the day by all adults.

Staff when organizing excursions will need to consider the availability of shade. Excursions should be planned for non – peak UV radiation hours of the day.

#### **Maintaining hydration levels:**

Infants and children's body/water ratio mass is significantly different from that of adults, therefore the risk for dehydration from outdoor play and hot weather is high and can be dangerous. Water will be offered to children throughout the day regardless of indoor or outdoor play settings. Children and adults are required to bring a named water bottle/teat bottle/sipper cup to the Centre and are encouraged to access water to drink throughout the day.

Cooled boiled water may be offered to infants and young children after bottle feeds if children show signs of continued thirst. Staff will monitor and document (via Daily Feedback Sheets) the input/output of infants and young children's fluids.

#### **Vitamin D:**

SunSmart Victoria also indicates that during the cooler months (May to August); it is important to have some exposure to UV radiation for vitamin D production. Vitamin D is necessary for bone, joint, muscle and neurological function. To ensure children and staff receive the required amounts of vitamin D during the months May to August hats do not need to be worn and sunscreen does not need to be applied (From May – Put Sun Hats Away!).

#### **Education:**

Management and Centre staff are to actively promote skin protection methods to children and families. This will be accomplished via the "Health" section on the Educational Curriculum (weekly). Also, resources such as the Sun Smart Poster Kits will be utilised for this purpose. Management will provide updated information on sun protection via displays, flyers, WEB sites and current tip sheets.

#### **NOTE:**

If ever unsure about the UV Index levels from May to August and whether sun protection measures should be in place, check the UV Index levels on the internet [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au) . Follow the links to *Find out today's UV Alert*.

#### **Links to other documents:**

- Information for Users and Conditions of Enrolment – Centre Information Manual;
- Staff and Family Induction checklists;
- Enrolment Form;
- Sign in & out documents
- Daily Feedback Sheet;
- Nutrition Statement;
- Development of the Educational Curriculum;
- Clothing Policy

#### **Reference:**

- SunSmart (Victoria) Early Childhood – SunSmart FAQs – fact sheets page 1 to 5 (22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006)
- Outside SunSmart Early Childhood Bulletin – Autumn 2008
- OHS legislation and UV radiation – 3. PREVENTION 3.2 Employer and Employee Responsibilities p5
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Sections 21 and 23: main Duties of Employers Section 25: Duties of Employees [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) >Laws and Regulations > Acts and Regulations
- La Trobe University Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC): Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 6.5
- Children's Services Act 1996, Section 26: Protection of children from hazards
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, Part 2: Principles for Children
- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 – Playgrounds and Playground Equipment Part 1: Development, installation, Inspection, maintenance and operation
- Shade/Sun protection (Appendix A)
- Department of Human Services; Children's Services Guidelines
- [www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au](http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au) >Outdoor play guide for Victorian children's services>The landscape>Sun protection

Approved 22 February 1994

Amended 30 April 1996

Amended 10 November 2003 (Sun Smart Early Childhood Bulletin – Sept 2003)

Amended 3 May 2006 Minute 359.7 ii.

Amended 30 April 2008

Approved 28 May 2008 Minute 377.13 ii.

Amended 24 March 2009

Approved 27 August 2009 Minute 388..7 iii.c.