

Cancer Research UK's

Sun Protection Policy Guidelines for Nurseries and Pre-schools

Introduction

This document is intended as a guide for anyone involved in developing a sun protection policy for nurseries and pre-schools.

It includes:

- an explanation of why sun protection is important and how a policy can help
- ideas on how to devise your own Sun Protection Policy
- guidance on monitoring and evaluating your policy
- suggestions for points you may want to cover in your policy
- an example nursery school policy
- an example letter home to parents

More information about skin cancer and sun protection in nursery and pre-schools, including this document, can be found on the Cancer Research UK SunSmart website at: www.sunsmart.org.uk

Please let Cancer Research UK know about your policy by contacting sunsmart@cancer.org.uk

These guidelines have been developed by Cancer Research UK's SunSmart team with feedback from educators and health professionals working nationally and in the community.

A sun protection policy is intended to outline ways in which the school community can work towards minimising harmful effects from over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. It only needs to be one page in length and should be designed to inform teachers, parents and students of this important issue.

Why is sun protection important for children and young people?

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK and the number of cases is rising at an alarming rate. The good news is that the majority of these cases could be prevented. Most skin cancers are caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. If we protect ourselves from the sun then we can reduce our risk. This is particularly important for children and young people whose skin is more delicate and easily damaged.

Studies have found that sunburn during childhood can increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. You may not see the damage immediately because skin cancer can take years to develop, but children who are over-exposed to the sun now are storing up problems for the future.

What about vitamin D?

We all need some sun to make enough vitamin D. Enjoying the sun safely, while taking care not to burn, can provide all the benefits of vitamin D without raising the risk of skin cancer. For more information on vitamin D, visit the SunSmart website: www.sunsmart.org.uk.

What is the SunSmart campaign?

SunSmart is the national skin cancer prevention campaign run by Cancer Research UK. The SunSmart schools initiative encourages nurseries and pre-schools to develop and adopt sun protection policies. They are part of a broader campaign communicating effective skin cancer prevention messages to the general public.

The five key SunSmart skin cancer prevention messages can be promoted by using the SMART code:

- S** tay in the shade 11-3
- M** ake sure you never burn
- A** lways cover up – wear a t-shirt, hat and wraparound sunglasses
- R** emember children burn more easily
- T** hen use at least factor 15+ sunscreen.

Why have a SunSmart sun protection policy?

Young children have sensitive skin that can be easily damaged by the sun's UV rays. Children in your care may also spend a lot of their time outdoors during the summer months. At this young age they are unable to take responsibility for their own sun protection. So carers have a responsibility to ensure that children are appropriately protected from the harmful effects of too much sun. Skin cancer prevention is important for all skin types, but those with fair skin are more susceptible to sun damage and particular care should be taken to ensure that children with fair skin are protected throughout summer. The UV Index is useful when thinking about protection for different skin types – visit the SunSmart website for more information: <http://www.sunsmart.org.uk/advice-and-prevention/uv-index/index.htm>. Developing a SunSmart sun protection policy is an important step towards encouraging good health now and in the future.

What is a SunSmart sun protection policy?

A sun protection policy works best when it is developed in consultation with all members of the nursery or pre-school community and is specific to your nursery or pre-school. There are some elements common to all sun safety policies. These include:

- **PPROTECTION:** providing an environment that enables children and staff to stay safe in the sun
- **EDUCATION:** learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour
- **COLLABORATION:** working with parents, the management structure and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety in your organisation.

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What support is available for developing a policy?

If you have any questions about creating a sun protection policy, please email us at sunsmart@cancer.org.uk. Your local health service (e.g. Primary Care Trust in England) may also be a useful source of information and be able to help whilst developing your policy. Helpful information can also be found via the following websites:

SunSmart website – www.sunsmart.org.uk

Skin Cancer Hub website <http://www.swpho.nhs.uk/skincancerhub/>

Local Authority <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/?action=authority>

Please let Cancer Research UK know about your policy by contacting sunsmart@cancer.org.uk. This will help us to monitor the success of our campaign.

How to go about developing your own Sun Protection Policy

Parents and carers are much more likely to be enthusiastic and supportive about a policy if they are involved in developing it. These pointers may help you get started:

- 1) Set up a meeting to discuss the development of a nursery or pre-school sun protection policy. Invite representatives from key groups including your management team, carers/teachers, parents, your health and safety coordinator (if you have one), and your local health service.
- 2) At the meeting decide on a person or group who will be responsible for devising and championing the policy.
- 3) Look at what the organisation is already doing to promote SunSmart behaviour. This will help you identify what needs to be done and how much progress you are making. Think about:
 - how long children currently spend outdoors in the middle of the day
 - what sort of shade is available (if any)
 - whether children and staff wear protective t-shirts and hats
 - whether sunscreen is encouraged and correctly used during the day (for advice on correct sunscreen use see www.sunsmart.org.uk) whether sun safety is included in learning topics.
- 4) Prepare a draft of your policy in consultation with users. Try to:
 - make sure every point is relevant to your nursery or pre-school
 - check the policy is realistic given the money and time available
 - be clear about who is responsible for implementing each task
 - agree timescales for implementing the different points on your plan.
- 5) Get feedback on your draft policy and present the final draft to key decision makers for their approval.
- 6) Implement the policy and publicise it so everyone is aware of what you are trying to achieve and why. Give regular updates on the progress you make.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

Evaluation is useful because it can help you to monitor how effective your sun protection policy has been and identify areas for improvement. For example you could:

- keep records of the implementation process: dates, costs and people's reactions
- photograph changes in the nursery/pre-school environment
- continue to gather feedback from all the people involved
- monitor incidences of sunburn to see if these are decreasing.

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You will find that your policy will change over time. It is important to keep updating your policy every year. Monitoring and evaluating your policy will help you to make effective changes. Create a SunSmart council with representatives from staff and parents to lead this and take responsibility for all SunSmart matters within the organisation.

It is important to have support from parents so they can continue to promote the SunSmart message at home and demonstrate the importance of it during outdoor family activities and on holidays.

SunSmart Sun Protection Policy Checklist for Nurseries and Pre-schools

The check list on the next page has been designed to help you start thinking about sun protection issues. These are suggestions – not all of them will be suitable for every organisation. So don't worry about implementing them all at once!

SunSmart Sun Protection Policy Checklist for Nurseries and Pre-schools

EDUCATION

It is important to raise awareness of why we need sun protection if you want to encourage children to adopt SunSmart behaviour.

Sun Protection Strategy	Currently in place	Planned soon	Not planned	Comments
Sun protection is discussed interactively with all children				
Children engage in activities (picture painting, songs etc.) designed to promote SunSmart behaviour				
Carers understand the importance of sun protection				
Parents are informed of the importance of sun protection through information sent home in newsletters and a letter informing them of the sun protection policy (see the parent letter template in these guidelines)				

PROTECTION:

Consider sun protection when planning all outdoor activities from April to September (the sun is strongest at this time of year). Babies should always be kept out of direct sunlight.

Sun Protection Strategy	Currently in place	Planned soon	Not planned	Comments
SHADE				
Trees have been planted to provide long-term shade				
Shade structures/gazebos provide long/short-term shade				
Seats and equipment are moved to shady areas				
Organised activities make use of the shade available				
TIMETABLING				
Outdoor activities and events are planned outside of 11-3 where possible and appropriate (if this is sometimes unavoidable, ensure hats, clothing and sunscreen are worn to minimise sunburn)				
CLOTHING				
Children are encouraged to wear wide-brimmed (or legionnaire style) hats when outside				
Spare hats are available for children who forget their own				
Children are encouraged to wear tops that cover their shoulders (vests and strappy tops are discouraged)				
Children are allowed to wear UV protective sunglasses				
Carers also wear suitable hats and clothing to reinforce role modelling				
SUNSCREEN				
Sunscreen should be used for covering exposed areas of skin when shade may be unavailable. Choose a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15+ which is also broad spectrum to protect from UVA and UVB rays and ensure that application of sunscreen is adequate and applied regularly. The following are only suggestions – they may or may not be appropriate for your primary school.				
Letters are sent home asking for parental permission for staff to apply sunscreen to children				
At least factor 15+ sunscreen is used in school and is applied adequately and regularly – this means two teaspoonfuls for the head, arms and neck or two teaspoonfuls if in a swimming costume				
Parents of children in half day childcare take responsibility for applying sunscreen to their children themselves				
If children spend the full day with you, sunscreen is reapplied				

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regularly between 11 and 3				
Children are supervised applying their own sunscreen with the help of mirrors, if they are old enough to do so				
Each child brings in their own labelled bottle of sunscreen from home				
There is a nursery/pre-school stock of sunscreen for pupils who forget/cannot afford their own				
The nursery/pre-school provides sunscreen free of charge				

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SAMPLE Nursery SunSmart Sun Protection Policy

Triangle Nursery School's SunSmart Sun Protection Policy

At Triangle we acknowledge the importance of sun protection and want staff and children to enjoy the sun safely. We will work with staff and parents to achieve this through:

EDUCATION - these measures are in place from now on:

- ❖ All children will have a SunSmart story time at the start of the summer term.
- ❖ All children will paint SunSmart pictures to reinforce the sun protection messages.
- ❖ We are adding a SunSmart song to those we normally sing around this time of year.
- ❖ Parents and guardians will be sent a letter explaining what we are doing about sun protection and how they can help at the beginning of the summer term and during summer holidays.
- ❖ We are running special sun protection training workshops for all staff in April, and the information on sun safety will be made available in the staff room.

PROTECTION – this is more of an ongoing process

Shade:

- ❖ We will encourage students to sit/play in the shade where it is available.
- ❖ We are planting willow trees in the outdoor play area by the sand pit (spring 10).
- ❖ Mr Geeves has kindly offered to make us a canopy to provide shade in the parent's outdoor waiting area (by July 10).
- ❖ We have bought a pop-up gazebo to provide instant shade (Easter 10).

Timetabling:

- ❖ Children will spend more time playing outside before 11am and after 3pm, and less time outside over lunch.

Clothing:

- ❖ Children are required to wear hats that cover the ears, face and neck between 11 and 3.
- ❖ We have bought some nursery hats to give to children who forget their own.
- ❖ All staff have also agreed to wear hats when outside to set a good example.

Sunscreen:

- ❖ We will send letters home asking for permission for staff to supervise children applying sunscreen before lunchtime during the summer months.
- ❖ Children will need to bring in their own clearly labelled bottle of sunscreen, at least factor 15+.
- ❖ We cannot currently supply sunscreen to all children on a daily basis because of cost. The SunSmart council will review this annually.

This policy was developed with the help of staff, parents and local health advisors in February 2010.

We will monitor our progress and review the policy annually.

Triangle Nursery School
12 Blossom Road
Wessex WW3

April 26th 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Now the summer is approaching I wanted to write and tell you about our new **sun protection policy**. We have developed this with the help of the parents involvement group to ensure that we can all enjoy the sun safely over the coming months.

The sun's rays are particularly strong over the summer and they can damage children's skin. This may not seem like a problem right now, but sadly it can lead to **skin cancer** in later life. Your child's health and well-being are very important to us. So we have decided to:

- ❖ spend more time discussing sun protection at nursery
- ❖ increase the shade in our playground
- ❖ actively encourage all children to wear a **hat** when they play outside. Please send your child to nursery wearing a comfortable wide brimmed hat or legionnaire style cap. We have bought some nursery hats to give to children who forget their own.

If your child is fair skinned it may be a good idea to provide additional protection by using **sunscreen** with a factor of at least 15+. Staff at Triangle will be supervising children applying sunscreen and helping those that are not able to apply sunscreen by themselves. If you would like your child to be included please return the sunscreen permission form with a bottle of factor 15+ sunscreen clearly labelled with your child's name.

More details of these and other new sun protection plans can be found in our **SunSmart policy** which I am attaching to this letter. I have also included a SunSmart information card which will explain how to keep your child safe from the sun at home.

Parents' support is very important if our new policies are going to work. You can help by:

- ❖ talking to your child about the importance of sun protection at home
- ❖ remembering to send your child to nursery with a wide brimmed hat.

Together I hope we can have a very happy and safe term to come!

All the best,

Ashley Smith
Triangle Manager