

## Protection from the sun

Enquiries to: Manager, Team Leaders, Teachers

Applies to: All children, parents, guardians, teachers and relievers.

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Management consulted Yes/No Teachers consulted Yes/No

Parents consulted Yes/No

Approved by Jenni Mason Designation: Centre Manager Date

**RATIONALE:**

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. New Zealand has the highest melanoma rates in the world. One or more episodes of sunburn in childhood and adolescence have been shown to increase the risk of melanoma later in life.

The Cancer Society recognises that a balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of skin cancer and getting enough sun exposure for children to maintain adequate vitamin D levels, particularly in the winter months. Between May and August, the UVI is 3 or under in most parts of New Zealand, especially in the south, so it is recommended that children do NOT wear hats, sunscreen or play in the shade during these months. During the winter months, encourage children to actively enjoy the sun. (Ref: The Cancer Society)

**POLICY:**

Children will be protected from harm that may be caused by over exposure to the sun.

This policy is followed whenever the children are at risk of getting sunburnt. Sunblock is applied throughout the summer months from daylight saving time, and throughout the year when the need is apparent. Teachers will apply sun block if the UV index is 3 or higher. This information is available through Met Service NZ.

**PROCEDURE:**

All children and teachers use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels are 3 and above. Particular care is taken between September/October and April (between 10am and 4pm) when UV levels reach their peak.

Be visible to others when applying sunscreen. (The Children’s Act 2014)

**1. Shade**

There are natural shelters (e.g., trees) and other shade areas providing enough coverage for all children playing outside.

The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and outdoor activities.

Children are to use available areas of shade when outside. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to play in the shade or indoors.

**2. Clothing**

When outside, children are to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Children are not permitted to wear singlet type tops or sun dresses with shoestring straps as they are outside for long periods of time during the summer months and these garments do not provide adequate protection.

**3. Hats**

Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e., legionnaire, broad-brimmed bucket style (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or deep crown bucket hat (minimum 6 cm brim). (Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore we ask that these are not provided for sun protection.) Parents are asked to provide a suitable hat, named, that can be kept at the centre. The centre will provide a hat for children only when one is not provided for them from home.

**4. Sunscreen**

A broad-spectrum sunscreen is available for teachers and children’s use. The centre uses the product that Consumers Institute tests prove is the most effective – currently ‘***365’***.

Sunscreen is applied at least 15-20 minutes before going outdoors and re-applied every two hours. If children are playing in water, sunscreen must also be water resistant. Parents/whānau are requested to provide their child’s own sunscreen if they require a sunscreen for highly sensitive skin/or allergies.

**Role modelling = Teachers will act as role models by:**

• wearing sun protective hats and clothing, and sunglasses when outside

• applying SPF 50+ broad spectrum sunscreen

• using shade whenever possible.

**Sharing information about sun protection**

The children learn about skin and ways to protect their skin from the sun. The sun protection policy is reinforced through teachers and children’s activities, and centre displays. Teachers and families are provided with information on the sun protection policy upon enrolment and through family newsletters, notice boards and meetings.

**When enrolling their child, families are:**

• Informed of the centre’s sun protection policy, and where to locate it on the parent notice board in the main entrance.

• Asked to ensure their child wears sun protective clothing (and to provide a suitable hat - named)

• Asked to provide SPF 50+, broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for their child if they have sensitive skin or allergies. The centre does provide sunscreen. (SPF50+)

• Encouraged to practice Sun Smart behaviours themselves when at the centre and in the home environment

**Review**

Management and teachers monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy annually and revise the policy when required.

## References: ECE Regulations, 2008, Licensing Criteria, (criteria to assess health and safety practices standard. Sun smart practices, The Children’s Act 2014, *The* Cancer Society or email Cancer Society at: admin@cancer.org.nz, For cancer information and support phone 0800 CANCER (226 237) or go to www.cancernz.org.nz