



# MSS & WAABINY OSHC SUN PROTECTION POLICY



## PURPOSE

Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) aims to ensure that all children, employees and visitors attending our services are protected from skin and eye damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun. The Australian Cancer Council advises that damage to the skin begins with first exposure to sunlight, and builds up year after year, leading to premature ageing of the skin and increased risk of skin cancer developing. We therefore wish to describe the process & involvement of employees, parents/custodians and volunteers in protecting children, employees and volunteers from the effects of exposure to the sunlight (ultraviolet (UV) radiation).

## SCOPE

All people involved in ensuring children’s health and sun protection at MSS – as well as children, families, educators and employees who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of relating quality practices.

## DESCRIPTION/GENERAL

Young children have very little skin pigment (melanin) to protect them from sun exposure. This means if a child gets too much sun, their skin can be permanently damaged resulting in moles, freckles, wrinkles, sunspots and even skin cancer later in life. It is widely understood that the risk of developing skin cancer is directly related to the intensity and duration of sun exposure. Research now indicates that childhood sun exposure is an important contributing factor to the development of skin cancer later in life, with the majority of damage occurring in the first twenty years of life.

Current scientific and anecdotal evidence suggests that overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation during childhood contributes to an increased risk to skin cancer throughout an individual’s lifetime. The Sun Protection Policy applies when the UV index is 3 or above.

Preventing sunburn and overexposure to UV radiation assists in reducing the probability of skin cancer and further skin damage. Sun protection policies and procedures are a life long commitment to infants, young children and adults to reduce the incidents of skin cancer and eye damage.

MSS has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a high level of sun protection during the hours of the service’s operation.

It is understood by MSS employees, children and families that there is a shared responsibility between the service and other stakeholders to reduce the risk of all types of injuries and risks to health in the workplace. Ultraviolet radiation exposure from the sun is a hazard, and as such, employers and employees both have roles and responsibilities to ensure appropriate measures are taken to prevent over-exposure, and therefore the Sun Protection Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority.

In meeting the service’s duty of care, it is a requirement under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* that management and employees implement and endorse the service’s Sun Protection Policy, and ensure a level of protection to all persons who access the service’s facilities and/or programs.

As part of general Sun Smart Strategies, children are required to wear hats that protect face, neck and ears whenever they are outside. Our policy around this is simple – no hat, no play.

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## CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Individual allergies, cultural differences, and other special needs regarding sunscreen application and outdoor play environment (shade provision) to be taken into account i.e. babies special needs; as competent learners children are educated from an early age about the need for sun protection.

## FAMILIES NEEDS

Their child will be protected from the harmful effects of exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun; their child will not be discriminated against regarding their cultural norms.

## EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Education about sun protection strategies including: use of effective shade, appropriate clothing (uniforms/hats), application of sunscreen, wearing of sunglasses, hygiene considerations and importance of role modelling sun-smart behaviours.

## MANAGEMENT NEEDS

To be informed and educated with regard to requirements and legislation, up to date with current trends, and to be assured that the service is meeting legislative requirements and providing best practice.

## LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

Laws relating to protection of privacy and confidentiality; duty of confidentiality arising from contract with parent; to whom and when information must be disclosed;

- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012;
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

## DEFINITIONS/PRINCIPLES/STRATEGIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

It is widely understood that the risk of developing skin cancer is directly related to the intensity and duration of sun exposure. MSS is therefore a "Sun Smart Centre" within the Cancer Council program and promotes the importance of sun protection for young children in particular.

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## **MANAGING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **TIMES OF UV RADIATION EXPOSURE**

The peak UV radiation periods are between 10am and 3pm during the day and at other times of the year. Outdoor activities are minimised depending on when UV levels are 3 and above and temperature readings indicate an unnecessary exposure to a health risk.

Employees and educators will utilise the shaded areas of the outdoor environment for play and plan outdoor play experiences according to real-time UV levels and predictions available on the ARPANSA website.

### **SHADE PROVISION, OUTDOOR PLAY AND OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT**

MSS will always first consider the availability of shade when planning and programming for outdoor play experiences or excursions.

Outdoor equipment that is not fixed will utilise the shaded areas of the outdoor environment at all times of the day.

MSS will continually assess the shade coverage of the outdoor play environment.

We will plan and program for outdoor play experiences and excursions during non-peak UV radiation hours of the day.

Outdoor play equipment that is fixed will be monitored for usability throughout the day by employees/educators.

Infants less than 12 months of age are always kept in dense shade and are more intensely monitored due to their sensitive skin.

Our employees and educators will ensure that the infants outdoor play environment utilises as much dense shade as possible.

## **PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS AND PRACTICES**

### **HATS**

All children must wear a hat that is either a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's style, when outdoors.

It is recommended that a sun protective hat adequately covers the face, back of the neck and ears.

Due to the risk of children becoming entangled in hat cords and choking, the cords must be removed from hats, or fitted with a break-away connector to prevent choking hazards.

Children who do not have a hat will be provided with a spare hat where available. MSS will ensure that hats are laundered after each use to minimise cross infection (for example, head lice).

Children who do not have their hats with them will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun.

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## CLOTHING

MSS recommends that children and employees wear loose fitting clothing that protect as much of the skin as possible for outdoor activities. Shirts that cover the shoulders and have collars and sleeves that are at least elbow length, and longer style skirts and shorts are most suitable.

Loose fitting and closely woven fabrics assist in protecting children from exposure to the sun.

Longer style tops and shorts are acceptable items of clothing to protect children from the sun.

Sleeveless shirts, dresses and singlets are not considered adequate clothing to protect children from the sun. Children will need to change their clothing to access outdoor play areas.

Infants (between 6-12 months) 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.

If planning for an excursion that involves swimming (either at a pool or beach setting), MSS employees must consider the style of swimwear and protective clothing children are wearing that reinforces sun protection practices.

## SHADE AND UV INDEX

Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activity. Planned outdoor play and activities will be set up in shady areas. Areas used for focused play i.e. sandpits, fixed play equipment, will be provided with shade throughout the year. Play areas for babies will be provided with shade all year round.

Management will ensure there are a sufficient number of shelters and trees (still planting and still growing) providing the desired natural shade in the outdoor play grounds.

The availability of shade will be considered when planning all outdoor excursions and activities. Portable shade structures may be used if the area does not have much natural or artificial shade. Children and educators/employees participating in excursions will be covered by the policy and broad brimmed or legionnaire style hats and protective clothing should be worn on all excursions. Sunscreen is also a necessity on day long excursions.

Outdoor play (unrestricted) may take place between 10am and 3pm, provided the UV index is low (<3). If the UV index is moderate (3) or above appropriate sun protection measures need to be undertaken by all educators/employees and children when outdoors.

## MAINTAINING HYDRATION LEVELS

Infants and children's body/water ratio mass is significantly different than from 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 are able to bring in water bottles from home 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.

Educators will monitor and document the input/output of infants and young children's fluids.

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## SUNSCREEN

The brand TRUE GUARD SPF 50+ UVA/UVB broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen is used at the service. If the sunscreen we supply is not suitable, parents/guardians will be asked to supply an alternative for their child.

MSS provides and applies sunscreen to all children.

Permission will be sought at enrolment from the family/custodians/custodian for MSS educators/employees to apply our SPF 50+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen.

Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before commencing outdoor play and not rubbed in (or as per manufacturer's instructions).

Sunscreen should be reapplied as per manufacturer's instructions or deemed necessary by employees/educators and if outside over extended periods of time re-applied every 2 hours.

Some children may present an allergic reaction to sunscreen. In this situation, MSS employees/educators will stop applying the sunscreen, notify the family/custodians and request that a hypoallergenic sunscreen is supplied by the family/custodians for the child to use.

School age children (or where a child is capable him or herself) will be encouraged to apply sunscreen themselves.

Employees/educators will assist applying sunscreen to infants and children as required and appropriate.

Educators will apply sunscreen to infants and younger children (0-5 years) as appropriate.

Parents/carer's should apply sunscreen for their child/children prior to drop off.

Hygiene issues should be considered when deciding how sunscreen is applied by educators. It is recommended that we use a tissue, damp cloth or damp paper towel to apply sunscreen, thus ensuring germs are not transferred from one child's skin to another. If a parent/guardian specifically requests that you do not apply sunscreen to their child, perhaps due to their cultural norms or a severe allergy, you will need to decide in consultation with the family whether the child will be allowed to play outside. If the family wishes their child to play outside discuss appropriate clothing and ensure a well shaded area for their play. We will cover our duty of care to the child, and alert the parent/guardian in writing of our recommendation that precautions against harmful UV rays should be taken.

For babies, under 12 months old, special consideration needs to be made in regard to applying sunscreen. Keeping babies covered or in full shade whilst outside should be considered and sunscreen only applied to areas of skin that cannot be covered by clothing. Where in doubt please consults with parents/guardians about their preferences for their baby.

## EYE PROTECTION

MSS supports the use of a sun protective hat to protect eyes from UV radiation.

If sunglasses must be worn when persons are outdoors, we recommend that sunglasses meet the Australian Standards AS/NZS 1067:2003 with a category number 2, 3 or 4.

Sunglasses not labelled with Australian Standards codes are considered toys and do not provide sun protection – and are not accepted as eye protection from the sun.

Sunglasses with a category number of 0 or 1 are considered fashion spectacles and do not provide adequate protection against UV radiation – and are not accepted as eye protection from the sun.

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## SUN PROTECTION INFORMATION AND ROLE MODELLING

Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy at MSS to maintain quality standards.

Employees and visitors to the service will act as role models by:

- Wearing appropriate hats, and adequate clothing when outdoors
- Using SPF 50+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen for skin protection
- Seeking shade whenever possible.
- Looking after their skin and avoiding sunburn
- Learning about skin and ways to protect skin from ultraviolet radiation from the sun will be incorporated into programmed activities
- The Sun Protection Policy will be reinforced in a positive way through family newsletters, notice boards and meetings, and is available for all parents and families to view on the “Parent & Family Resources” website page
- Educators/employees and families will be provided with educational material on sun protection

