

Policy on sun protection: HS 07

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Policy prepared by: EH Policy reference group

Background to the policy statement:

Sunburn occurs when the skin is exposed to ultraviolet light. After acute exposure, the skin becomes red, hot and painful. Whilst sunburn may appear to be a short term problem, recent research indicates that sun damage is accumulative and that damage to a young child's skin is particularly serious as a long term health risk and even skin cancer (Fact sheet Tanglin Medical Centre 2007).

Aim/purpose of the policy statement:

To ensure that children and the adults who care for them have a heightened awareness of skin/sun protection and their role/responsibilities in minimizing skin damage.

Policy statement:

At EtonHouse schools and preschools, we believe that every attempt must be made to minimize sun induced skin damage for children and adults.

- **Children should have limited exposure to the sun especially during the hours of 11.30am-3.00pm;**
- **Shade provision in the outdoor playground must be seen as a priority;**
- **Children and adults must wear broad rimmed, shady hats when outdoors;**
- **High protection sunscreen should be applied to children when engaging in outdoor activities;**
- **Staff should wear hats and are strongly encouraged to apply sunscreen protection when outdoors;**

Implementation practices and procedures:

Parent's responsibilities:

- We ask that parents ensure that children are provided with a large brimmed shady hat, irrespective of the weather (a child can still be severely sunburned on cloudy days);
- We ask that all clothing, including hats, be clearly labeled by the parent so that the name is clearly visible to the child/staff members. The wearing of individual hats reduces the spread of e.g. head lice;
- Parents are encouraged to supply their child with a personal high sun protection factor (SPF 15 or above) sunscreen, preferably water resistant. This respects hypo allergic

reactions when generic creams are applied to all children. Sunscreen applicators must also be clearly labeled with the child's name;

- Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child before leaving home, as outdoor events and the outdoor play period are generally scheduled for the morning period;
- Parents who express concern about sun glare and eye damage may wish to send sun glasses for their child to wear when outdoors. These must be clearly labeled with the child's name;

School/centre/staff responsibilities:

- Timetabling of outdoor play/outdoor events should wherever possible limit sun exposure for children especially between the hours of 11.30am and 3.00pm;
- Natural shade should be complimented by artificial shade e.g. umbrellas; marquee shade; awnings and shade pergolas. Maintenance teams may need reminders about pruning of shade trees so that the provision of natural shade is not reduced unnecessarily;
- The planting of fast growing trees which offer appropriate shade should be seen as a priority in playground development;
- Staff must serve as positive role models for young children, applying sunscreen; wearing broad brimmed hats and protective clothing and seeking out places to work and play in the shade;
- Parents should be provided with information as to the benefits of applying a high sun protection factor sunscreen and to have access to the EH policy on sun protection. However should a parent refuse to apply sunscreen to their child, they have the right to do so;
- Appropriate clothing should be worn by children and staff. This includes a broad brimmed hat (an 8-10cm brim is best) providing approximately 50% shade to the face, including eyes and neck. *Shirts should cover the shoulders. Closely woven fabrics are most suitable with loose sleeves to allow for ventilation* (Bell, 1995 p 10);
- Adults should support young children in applying their own sunscreen. *Sunscreen is best applied to cool, dry skin, 15-30 minutes prior to exposure to the sun. This allows time for the sunscreen to bond with the skin. Sunscreen needs to be applied to all areas exposed to the sun* (Bell 1995 p10). Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours;

- Care should be taken when applying sunscreen to a child's face as it can irritate the eyes. Sunscreen on the backs of children's hands should be thoroughly rubbed in as children may inadvertently rub it into their eyes;
- Written permission should be sought if applying a generic sunscreen to the children in class. Parents must be informed of the proposed generic brand and label contents to ensure that they are giving informed consent. Should a change in the brand of sunscreen be made, written permission must be re-sought;
- Hats should not be shared amongst groups of children to minimize cross infection e.g. head lice;
- The school may be able to provide a hat for the child who has genuinely forgotten their hat. However there can be no guarantee that school supplies will allow this practice. (Please note the importance of staff role modeling the importance of wearing broad brimmed hats during outdoor play/events);
- Reminders about the benefits of sun/skin protection should regularly be included in newsletters/communication booklets.

Evaluation policy:

A review of this policy and implementation procedures will be conducted every two years. This review will be undertaken in collaboration between the Principals and staff of the EtonHouse Education Centre (the EH policy reference group).

Bell, C. (1995). *Highlighting health*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Early Childhood Association.