



OSHC Sun Protection Policy

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Background

Maintaining a balanced level of ultraviolet (UV) exposure is essential for optimal health. Insufficient exposure can lead to vitamin D deficiency, while excessive exposure can cause sunburn, eye damage, and skin cancer. Sun exposure during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Therefore, it is crucial for OSHC services to ensure that children and educators are exposed to UV radiation in a balanced manner to support their overall well-being. Ultraviolet radiation enables the production of vitamin D in the body, which plays a vital role in promoting healthy bones, muscles, and for general health. Sensible sun protection when UV is 3 and above does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency. Therefore, maintaining an appropriate level of sun exposure is crucial for safeguarding our health.

Scope

This policy relates to children, families, educators, management and to visitors to the Service. It related to all outdoor activities on and off site of Mercedes College.

Policy Statement

The Mercedes College OSHC service is committed to promoting a balanced approach to ultraviolet radiation exposure. We adhere to the latest scientific advice on UV exposure, providing children and educators with safe opportunities for appropriate UV exposure based on the UV index. We acknowledge that the level of exposure may vary seasonally. Our policy aligns with Cancer Council SA's policy guidance. By following these guidelines, we prioritise the well-being and safety of our community members during outdoor activities.

Before school care: sun protection is not required, as the UV Index is rarely 3 and above at this time. However, hat wearing is mandated before school during terms 1, 3 and 4.

After school care: sun protection is required for all outdoor activities during terms 1 and 4, and whenever the UV is 3 and above at other times.

Vacation care: sun protection is required for all outdoor activities from 1 August to 30 April and whenever the UV is 3 and above at other times.

Staff and children will record the daily sun protection times each morning on our UV chart for our location using the free SunSmart Global UV app to guide our sunscreen application process.

Implementation

Shade and Protection

In South Australia, from August to April the UV index reaches 3 and above on most days. During these months, and when the UV index reaches 3 or above, our service encourages play in the shade, which our educators consistently model. A combination of sun protection measures are considered when planning outdoor activities such as excursions and water-based activities. As directed by the Service, we prioritise the well-being of our students and staff.

We are mindful of outdoor activities scheduled during the peak UV periods of the day and make efforts to either limit these activities or ensure they take place in shaded areas. For instance, we access shaded play areas or the indoor court whenever possible. By actively managing UV exposure during peak UV times of the day, we prioritise the health and safety of our community members.

Sun-Safe Equipment

At Mercedes College OSHC, we prioritise sun safety and have established guidelines for sun-safe equipment. Families are responsible for ensuring their child/children have SPF 50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen, which should be applied throughout the day. It is important for families to label the sunscreen and inform educators of the approved brand and type for their child/children. Families are responsible for applying sunscreen before their child attends Vacation Care.

To further ensure sun protection, our OSHC service supplies a recommended brand of SPF 50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen for use by children, staff, and visitors. The sunscreen provided follows the recommendations of the

Cancer Council, such as the use of broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF 50+. The expiry dates of sunscreen products will be regularly checked to ensure their effectiveness.

Staff and children will record the daily sun protection times each morning on our UV chart for our location using the free SunSmart Global UV app to guide our sunscreen application process. Sunscreen is applied 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every 2 hours is remaining or returning outdoors.

Hats are mandated for the following time periods:

Before school care: hat wearing is mandated for all outdoor activities before school during terms 1, 3 and 4.

After school care: hat wearing is mandated for all outdoor activities after school during terms 1 and 4, and whenever the UV is 3 and above at other times.

Vacation care: hat wearing is mandated for all outdoor activities from 1 August to 30 April and whenever the UV is 3 and above at other times.

While outside for playtime, all children are required to wear sun safe hats including a broad-brimmed, bucket style or legionnaire hat. Baseball caps are not acceptable. We encourage clothing that includes collared or higher neckline shirts with covered shoulders and longer-style dresses, skirts or shorts to minimise sun exposure. Children are advised not to wear halter neck or singlet tops. Long sleeved rash vests/t-shirts are worn for outdoor water-based activities. Sunglasses are also encouraged for both children and educators. In situations where children lack appropriate sun-safe clothing, hats, or are unable or unwilling to wear sunscreen, they will be directed to play in shaded areas only, ensuring their sun protection.

Safe Exposure

At Mercedes College OSHC, we strive to provide an appropriate level of sun exposure during the safest seasonal period, which is between May and July in South Australia when the UV rating is usually below 3. The level of safe sun exposure will vary based on factors such as location, skin type, daily activities, and the UV rating. We acknowledge that children may have already received some sun exposure during the school day, and our educators will regularly check the current recommendations from the Cancer Council of South Australia regarding sun exposure.

Roles and responsibilities

The Directors and Educators are responsible for:

- Ensuring the availability of SPF 50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen that is within its expiration date.
- Modelling sun safety practices by wearing sun-safe hats, protective clothing, and sunglasses, using

sunscreen and seeking shade themselves. This is also a Work Health and Safety requirement.

- Encouraging visitors and volunteers to use a combination of sun protection measures when participating in or attending outdoor activities with the service.
- Supporting younger children and educating older children on proper sunscreen application before going outdoors.
- Ensuring that all children wear sun-safe hats and, if available, sunglasses.
- Encouraging children to seek shaded areas during outdoor play and require those without appropriate sun-safe hat, clothing or unwillingness to wear sunscreen to play only in shaded areas.
- Assisting and encouraging children to apply water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before water activities.
- Actively engaging children in discussions and planned experiences about sun safety with children, seizing every opportunity to promote sun smart practices.
- Sun protection information and the services sun protection policy is promoted to the whole service community through face to face discussions, Seesaw, notice board, Facebook and staff meetings.

Families are responsible for:

- Supporting our OSHC policies and community by encouraging children to dress appropriately and follow sun safety measures.

Other OSHC Policies related to this Policy

- Excursion Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Relationship to regulations

[National Quality Standards \(NQS\)](#)

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

Cancer Council of SA for general information and resources

www.cancersa.org.au

Reference to Sun Protection

[CESA Duty of Care Policy](#)