Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with two out of every three people developing some form of skin cancer before they are 70. Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Sun exposure in the first ten years of life determines, to a substantial degree, the likelihood of skin cancer developing later in life.

Cancer Council SA advises people to protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet (UV) radiation level is 3 and above—this is when it is strong enough to cause damage to unprotected skin. For much of South Australia, UV radiation levels are 3 and above every day from September to April—it is during these months that sun protection is necessary.

Cancer Council SA recommends that a skin protection policy be in place from 1 September until 30 April when UV radiation levels are 3 and above. It is highly recommended that UV radiation levels are monitored daily, particularly during May and August as they still may be 3 or above depending on your location. Cancer Council SA also recommends that particular care should be taken during these months during sun protection times, when the UV radiation levels are at their highest. The UV Alert with the daily sun protection times can be found at the Bureau of Meteorology website via [www.bom.gov.au/au/uv/](http://www.bom.gov.au/au/uv/) or download the SunSmart app and/or widget via [https://www.cancersa.org.au/cut-my-risk/sunsmart/resources/sunsmart-app-and-widget](https://www.cancersa.org.au/cut-my-risk/sunsmart/resources/sunsmart-app-and-widget). Families are welcome to visit any of these sites daily prior to attending the centre or on weekends to inform themselves of the UV radiation levels each day.

It is important to balance sun protection with safe sun exposure for the production of vitamin D for bone growth and development. During May to August, at times when the UV radiation level is below 3, sun protection for most people is not necessary.

The aims of the Stirling East Kindergarten Skin Protection Policy are to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for, and decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in our centre to reduce the level of sun exposure when the UV radiation level is 3 and above.

Implementation

This policy is for implementation from 1 September to 30 April. Outside of this time care should also be taken when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our Early Childhood Service are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the sun. It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of Stirling East Kindergarten will use the following skin protection strategies:

1. Take care to protect the skin when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above. Extra care should be taken during peak sun protection times when UV radiation levels are highest.

   1.1 The children’s lunch, rest time and indoor activities will be held during the sun protection times where possible (e.g. often between approximately 10.00 am and 3.00 pm) to minimise exposure to UV radiation in the middle of the day.

   1.2 Whenever possible, all outdoor activities will be scheduled outside the daily sun protection times and/or in the shaded areas of the service.

2. Use the shade of trees, pergolas, umbrellas and tents whenever outdoors.
2.1 Tree planting will be organised at the service with priority given any open space grassed area.

2.2 The sandpit and play equipment area to be a priority for shade structure planning.

2.3 The further provision of shade areas is a priority for the service.

3 Wear appropriate clothing which protects the skin.

3.1 Children, staff and parents will be expected to wear a broad brimmed hat, legionnaire style hat, or a bucket hat (bucket hat must have a deep crown and minimum 5 cm brim for children under 5 years of age and 6 cms for older children and adults) whenever they are involved in outside activities. Children not wearing an appropriate hat will be expected to play inside or on the veranda.

3.2 Children will be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and at least elbow length sleeves and longer style shorts/skirts. Children’s shoulders must be covered. Children must wear t-shirts under strappy dresses. Sleeve less tops/singlet tops are not allowed.

4 Apply a broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ to clean, dry skin, 15—20 minutes before going outdoors for lunch or activities. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time or more frequently if involved in water activities or perspiring.

4.1 Adequate time (minimum 20 minutes) must be allowed for correct application of sunscreen on children before they go outdoors.

4.2 Parents will be encouraged to supply sunscreen for their children although there will be bulk sunscreen packs available at the service.

4.3 Sunscreen will be applied by parents before the children’s morning outdoor activities and at lunchtime by staff before they go outside in the afternoon at times when the UV is 3 and above.

5 Reinforcing the Sun Smart messages in all service activities and in general service procedures is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.

5.1 Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate Sun Smart strategies in all service activities.

5.2 Skin cancer prevention, sun exposure and vitamin D information will be included in appropriate teaching activities.

5.3 Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources from Cancer Council SA.

5.4 Information about the centre’s Skin Protection Policy will be given to all new staff, students and families.

6 The Stirling East Kindergarten Skin Protection Policy will be evaluated every two years.

6.1 Policy issues will be discussed at staff and parent meetings.

For more information please don’t hesitate to contact: Cancer Council Information and Support 13 11 20 or visit their website on: www.sunsmart.org.au or www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart

Reviewed October 2015

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Chairperson  Victoria Wilckens