**Developing your own sun protection policy**

A sun protection policy works best if it is developed in consultation with all members of the nursery or pre-school community and is specific to your nursery or pre-school. There are some elements common to all sun safety policies. These include:

* PROTECTION: providing an environment that enables children and staff to stay safe in the sun.
* EDUCATION: learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour.
* COLLABORATION: working with parents, the management structure and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety in your organisation.

The policy will work best if it is revised and updated every year. By monitoring and evaluating your policy on an ongoing basis you will be in the best position to make effective changes in the future.

The following five steps may assist you in developing your sun protection policy:

1. Look at what your organisation is already doing to promote sun safety behaviour. This will help you identify what needs to be done and how much progress you are making. Think about:

* How long children currently spend outdoors in the middle of the day.
* What sort of shade is available (if any).
* Whether children and staff wear protective t-shirts and hats.
* Whether sunscreen is encouraged and correctly used during the day (for advice on correct sunscreen use see www.sunsmart.org.uk).
* Whether sun safety is included in learning topics.

1. Set up a meeting to discuss the development of a nursery or pre‐school sun protection policy. Invite representatives from key groups including your management team, carers/teachers, parents, your health and safety co‐ordinator (if you have one). You can also seek advice from the local authority Environmental Health Department and your local health service . You could create a council responsible for taking charge of all sun safety matters and for the delivery and promotion of the policy.
2. Prepare a draft of your policy in consultation with users. Try to:

* Check the policy is realistic given the budget and time available.
* Be clear about who is responsible for implementing each task.
* Agree timescales for implementing the different points on your plan.

1. Get feedback on your draft policy and present the final draft to key decision makers for their approval.
2. Implement the policy and publicise it so everyone is aware of what you are trying to achieve and why. Give regular updates on the progress you make.

**Monitoring and evaluating the policy**

Evaluation is useful because it can help you to monitor how effective your sun protection policy has been and identify areas for improvement. For example you could:

* Keep records of the implementation process; dates, costs and people’s reactions.
* Photograph changes in the nursery/pre-school environment.
* Continue to gather feedback from all the people involved.
* Monitor incidences of sunburn to see if these are decreasing.

It is important to keep updating your policy every year. Monitoring and evaluating your policy will help you to make effective changes.

It is important to have support from parents so they can continue to promote the sun safety message at home and demonstrate the importance of it during outdoor family activities and on holidays.

**Sun Protection Policy Checklist for Nurseries and Pre-schools**

The checklist on the next page has been designed to help you start thinking about sun protection issues. These are suggestions – not all of them will be suitable for every organisation, so don’t worry about implementing them all at once.

**Sun Protection Policy Checklist for Nurseries and Pre-schools**

**EDUCATION**

It is important to raise awareness of why we need sun protection if you want to encourage children to adopt SunSmart behaviour.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sun Protection Strategy** | **Currently in place** | **Planned soon (deadline date)** | **Not planned** | **Comments** |
| Sun protection is discussed interactively with all children. |  |  |  |  |
| Children engage in activities (picture paining, songs, etc.) designed to promote sun safety behaviour. |  |  |  |  |
| Carers understand the importance of sun protection. |  |  |  |  |
| Parents are informed of the importance of sun protection through information sent home in newsletters and a letter informing them of the sun protection policy (example letter template is provided in this pack). |  |  |  |  |

**PROTECTION**

Consider sun protection when planning all outdoor activities from April to September (the sun is strongest at this time of year). **Current research suggests that shade and clothing may offer better protection from UV rays than sunscreen**. Babies should always be kept out of direct sunlight.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sun Protection Strategy** | **Currently in place** | **Planned soon**  **(deadline date)** | **Not planned** | **Comments** |
| **SHADE** | | | | |
| Trees and shade structures provided in outdoor play area. |  |  |  |  |
| Seats and equipment are moved to shady areas. |  |  |  |  |
| Fundraising – for trees or shade structures if required. |  |  |  |  |
| Organised activities make use of the shade available. |  |  |  |  |
| **TIMETABLING** | | | | |
| Outdoor activities and events are planned outside of 11am – 3.00pm where possible and appropriate (if this is unavoidable hats, clothing and sunscreen are worn to minimise sunburn). |  |  |  |  |
| **CLOTHING** | | | | |
| Children are encouraged to wear wide-brimmed (or legionnaire style) hats when outside. |  |  |  |  |
| Spare hats are available for children who forget their own. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to were tops that cover their shoulders (strappy tops and vests are discouraged). |  |  |  |  |
| Children are allowed to wear UV protective sunglasses. |  |  |  |  |
| Carers also wear suitable clothing and hats to reinforce role modelling. |  |  |  |  |
| **SUNSCREEN** | | | | |
| Sunscreen should be used for covering exposed areas of skin when shade may be unavailable. We would recommend that you choose a sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ which is also broad spectrum to protect from UVA and UVB rays (at least a 4 star) and ensure that application of sunscreen is adequate and applied regularly. | | | | |
| Letters are sent home asking for parental permission for staff to apply sunscreen to children. |  |  |  |  |
| A broad spectrum sunscreen of at least 4 star SPF 30+ sunscreen is used and is applied adequately and regularly – two teaspoons for the head, arms and neck or two tablespoonfuls if in a swimming costume. |  |  |  |  |
| Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen before brining children to nursery or pre-school. |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sun Protection Strategy** | **Currently in place** | **Planned soon**  **(deadline date)** | **Not planned** | **Comments** |
| **SUNSCREEN (cont.)** | | | | |
| Sunscreen is re-applied at least 30 minutes before children go outside and at regular intervals between the hours of 11am – 3.00pm. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are supervised applying their own sunscreen with the help of mirrors, if they are old enough to do so. |  |  |  |  |
| Each child brings in their own sunscreen from home. Labelled with their name and date of opening. |  |  |  |  |
| There is a nursery/pre-school stock of sunscreen for children who forget their own – which is provided free of charge by the nursery. |  |  |  |  |
| Staff have been instructed on the correct way to apply sunscreen to children’s skin. |  |  |  |  |
| **DRINKING WATER** | | | | |
| Children are provided with drinking water bottles which are identified as their own. |  |  |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to drink water regularly - especially in warm weather to keep hydrated. |  |  |  |  |

**EXAMPLE NURSERY/PRE-SCHOOL SUN PROTECTION POLICY**

Premises

Address

Too much exposure to ultraviolet light (UV) radiation from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of skin cancer and staff and children are at risk of sunburn within 10-15 minutes of being exposed to strong sunlight.

At *NAME OF NURSERY* we acknowledge the importance of sun protection and want staff and children to enjoy the sun safely. We will work with staff and parents to achieve this through:

**EDUCATION**

* All children will have a SunSmart story time at the start of the summer term.
* All children will paint SunSmart pictures to reinforce the sun protection messages.
* We are adding a SunSmart song to those we normally sing to help children remember sun safe messages.
* We will check the Met Office UV rating on a weekly basis and this will be used to educating the children in the recommended sun protection that is required for the day.
* Parents and guardians will be asked through letters/newsletters/ verbal communication to support this policy by encouraging their children to adopt sun safe habits including seeking shade, wearing appropriate clothing, hat and sunscreen.
* Parents should also act as positive role models and set a good example by seeking shade wherever possible and wearing suitable clothing, hat and sunscreen.
* Our staff will act as positive role models and set a good example by seeking shade wherever possible and wearing suitable clothing, hat a sunscreen.
* Staff have received training in the importance of sun safety and information is available to staff.

**PROTECTION**

* When the sun in strong we will encourage the children to sit/play in the shade where it is available.
* We will not expose babies under the age of 12 months to direct sun light. Babies will always be in the shade while playing outdoors.
* The nursery play area has shade provided by the nursery building/trees/canopy affixed to the building/temporary structures i.e. gazebos/parasols/play tents.
* If children attend nursery with sunburn we will ensure that they remain indoors and are not exposed to further UV radiation.

**TIMETABLING**

* Children spend more time outside playing before 11.00am and after 3.00pm and less time outside over lunch.

**CLOTHING**

* Children will be encouraged to wear clothes that provide good sun protection i.e. lightweight clothes that cover shoulders and arms.
* Children will were hats that cover the ears, face and neck between 11.00am and 3.00pm.
* We have spare hats available for children who forget to bring their own.
* We will inform parents of the importance of providing appropriate clothing and sun hats for children to wear at nursery.

**SUNSCREEN**

* We will write to parents to ask them to apply sunscreen to children before bringing them to nursery.
* We will ask parents for written permission to allow staff to apply sunscreen to children when required.
* Parents will be asked to provide the nursery with sunscreen for their child to use. Sunscreen should be a broad spectrum sunscreen which is at lead SPF30 with a minimum star rating of 4.
* Sunscreen should be clearly labelled with the child’s name and the date the sunscreen was opened.
* We will provide spare sunscreen for children who have forgotten to bring their own to nursery. The sunscreen will be a hypo-allergenic sunscreen suitable for children.
* Parents will be asked for any details in relation to allergies and sunscreen and their permission will be sought before application of the nursery sunscreen.
* Sunscreen should be applied to children throughout the spring and summer months from April to October even on cloudy days. UV rays are still able to penetrate cloud cover and cause skin damage.

**DRINKING WATER**

* We nursery/parents will provide drinking bottles for children which are clearly marked with the child’s name/photograph.
* Children will be encouraged to increase their intake of water in hot weather and will be encouraged to drink water during outdoor play times.

This policy has been developed with the help of the staff and parents of *Nursery Name* on *date.*

We will monitor our progress and review the policy annually.

Next review date *DATE*

**SAMPLE NURSERY SCHOOL LETTER TO PARENTS**

Nursery Name

Nursery Address

Dear Parent or Guardian

Now summer is approaching, I wanted to write to you to tell you about out new **sun protection policy**. We have developed out policy with the help of staff so that we can all enjoy the sun safely over the coming months.

The sun’s rays are particularly strong over the summer and they can damage children’s skin. This may not seem like a problem right now, but sadly it can lead to **skin cancer** in later life. Your child’s health and wellbeing are very important to us, so we have decided to:

* Spend more time discussing sun protection at nursery.
* Increase the shade in our playground
* Actively encourage all children to wear a **hat** and **lightweight clothing which covers their shoulders and arms** when they pay outside. Please send your child to nursery with a lightweight jacket, jumper or cardigan and a comfortable wide brimmed or legionnaire style hat. We have a limited number of hats for children to use at nursery if they forget their own.

Please provide a broad spectrum sunscreen for your child to use at nursery. Sunscreen should be at least a SPF 30 and minimum 4 star rating. Could you please label the sunscreen with your child’s name and the date the sunscreen was opened.

We would ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before bringing them to nursery and our staff will apply sunscreen to children prior to them playing outside. Please could you sign the enclosed consent form to allow our staff to apply sunscreen to your child.

We have also bought sunscreen for children to use at nursery if they have forgotten their own. The sunscreen that we will provide is Name of sunscreen. If you do not wish to us apply this sunscreen please ensure that you provide your own.

I have attached a copy of our **sun protection policy** to this letter together with a SunSmart information card which will explain how to keep your child safe from the sun at home.

Parent’s support is very important if our new policies are going to work. You can help by:

* Talking to your child about the importance of sun protection at home.
* Remembering to send your child to nursery with a wide brimmed / legionnaire style hat.

Together I hope we can have a very happy and safe summer.

All the best,

Nursery Manager

**Parents Information**

**Questions & Answers**

**Why is sun protection important for children and young people?**

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK and the number of cases is rising at an alarming rate. The good news is that the majority of these cases could be prevented. Most skin cancers are caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. If we protect ourselves from the sun then we reduce our risk. This is particularly important for children and young people whose skin is more delicate and easily damaged.

There are simple steps you can take to enjoy the sun safely – cover up with clothing and a hat, spend time in the shade and apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least a 4 star UV rating SPF 30+.

**What is Solar Radiation?**

Solar radiation is the radiant energy emitted by the sun. The sun emits different kinds of light, some of which we can see and others that are invisible;

* The visible light you see
* The infrared radiation you feel as heat
* The ultraviolet (UV) radiation that tans your skin

There are three types of UV radiation classified by their wavelength. The shorter the wavelength the more harmful the UV radiation. However shorter wavelength UV radiation is less able to penetrate the skin.

* **Short wavelength UVC** - the most damaging type of UV radiation, but it is prevented from reaching the earth’s surface by the ozone layer
* **Medium wavelength UBV** – is very biologically active but cannot penetrate beyond the superficial skins layers. It is responsible for delayed tanning, sunburn, premature skin aging, wrinkling of the skin and ultimately skin cancer. Most UBV radiation is filtered by the ozone layer before reaching the earth.
* **Long wavelength UVA** – accounts for 95% of the UV radiation reaching the earth’s surface. It is able to penetrate deeply into the skin and is responsible for the immediate tanning effect, premature skin aging, wrinkling of the skin and skin cancer.

**What about Vitamin D?**

We all need some sun to make enough vitamin D. Enjoying the sun safely, while taking care not to burn, should help most people get a good balance without raising the risk of skin cancer.

Most people in the UK only need to spend a short amount of time in the sun to make enough vitamin D. This is typically less than the time taken to lead to sunburn. Once a person has made enough vitamin D, any extra is turned into inactive substances, so heavy sun exposure does not improve vitamin D levels beyond a maximum threshold, but it can increase the risk of skin cancer.

Further information in relation to vitamin D is available in the consensus statement made in 2010 and endorsed by the British Association of Dermatologists, Cancer Research UK, Diabetes UK, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the National Heart Forum, the National Osteoporosis Society and the Primary Care Dermatology Society.

<http://www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/skin-cancer/vitamin-d/vitamin-d-consensus-2010>

**Why have a sun protection policy?**

Nurseries, pre-schools and schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils and their employees are protected from overexposure to UV rays from the sun. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines for skin cancer prevention (2011) recommend that schools “develop, implement and monitor a specially tailored policy to ensure people are protected as much as possible”. This is particularly important when children are involved in outdoor activities and excursions where the potential for sunburn is higher. Although fair-skinned people have a higher risk of sun damage, sun protection is relevant to everyone. According to the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) exposure to UV radiation is the main cause of both malignant melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer - 5 workers a day get skin cancer.