Northfield Preschool

Skin Protection Policy

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 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 everyday from September to April—it is during these months that sun protection is necessary.

Cancer Council SA also 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, particularly during May and August as they still may be 3 or above. Cancer Council SA also recommends that particular care should be taken during these months between 10.00 am – 3.00 pm, when the UV radiation levels are at their highest.

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 purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our Preschool are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the sun.

Aims
Early Childhood Educators at Northfield aim 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 Preschool 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.

Preschool staff and children are expected to wear hats when going outside for play.

Procedure
It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of Northfield Preschool will use the following skin protection strategies:

1.1 Take care to protect the skin when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above. Extra care should be taken between 10.00am and 3.00pm when UV radiation levels are highest in the middle of the day.
1.2 The children’s lunch, rest time and indoor activities will be organised to minimise exposure to UV radiation in middle of the day.
1.3 During term 1 and 4 whenever possible, all outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10.00am and after 3.00pm or in the shaded areas of the school.
1.4 Use the shade of trees, pergolas, verandah and sandpit shade whenever outdoors in terms 1 and 4 is a priority.  
1.5 The provision of shade areas is also a priority for Preschool.  
1.6 Children must wear a hat such as a legonnaire’s hat or broad brimmed hat at all times while interacting outside during the hours of 10.00am and 3.00pm in the months of September to April. If no hat is provided, the child must remain under the shade of the verandah in order to minimise exposure to UV radiation and protect the skin.

The use of sunscreen  
2.1 Adequate time must be allowed for correct application of sunscreen on children before they go outdoors.  
2.2 Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period (play or outdoor activity).  
2.3 Parents will be encouraged to supply sunscreen for their children although there will be bulk sunscreen packs available at the service.

Protective measures  
3.1 Children should be protected by shade, clothing and hats.  
3.2 Sunscreen should be applied to small areas of exposed skin not protected by clothing and hats, where necessary in terms 1 and 4.  
3.3 Reinforcing of the SunSmart message in Preschool activities and in general procedures as it is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.  
3.4 Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies.  
3.5 Skin cancer prevention will be included in appropriate teaching activities.

Sustainability  
4.1 Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources from Cancer CouncilSA.  
4.2 Information about the Preschool's SunSmart Policy will be available to all staff, students and families.  
4.3 The ‘Northfield Preschool skin protection policy’ will be evaluated on a two yearly basis, next review: term 2, 2014.  
4.4 Policy issues will be discussed at staff and parent meetings.

For more information contact:  
Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20  

From the Cancer Council SA website:  