

## Background

Excessive ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause sunburn, dehydration, heat-related illness, eye damage, and significantly increase the risk of skin cancer. Children are particularly vulnerable to UV damage, making sun protection an important part of protecting their health and wellbeing. C&K recognises the benefits of outdoor play and is committed to providing safe outdoor learning environments while managing the risks associated with UV exposure and extreme heat.

Sun safety is a year-round responsibility as UV levels in Queensland reach harmful levels (UV Level 3 and above) throughout the year. When spending time outdoors, children, teachers and educators will:

1. **Slip** on protection clothing
2. **Slop** on sunscreen
3. **Slap** on a hat
4. **Seek** shade
5. **Slide** on sunglasses (optional)

## General responsibilities

**Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge (RPIC) will:**

- Lead the development and implementation of a centre *Outdoor Environment Risk Assessment*, ensuring sun safety risks are identified, assessed, and effectively controlled. Review risk assessment at least annually and whenever there is a significant change or safety concern, including, but not limited to, shade removal or deterioration, installation of new surfaces or equipment, a heat- or UV-related incident or near miss, an employee concern, or forecast heatwave conditions.
- Ensure this procedure and centre *Outdoor Environment Risk Assessment* are included in the induction of all teachers and educators, including relief staff.
- Regularly monitor compliance with this procedure and the *Outdoor Environment Risk Assessment*, taking prompt action where non-compliance is identified.
- Monitor local weather and UV levels and sun protection times via the SunSmart app.
- Encourage team members to complete the Cancer Council's free learning modules (optional).
- Outline this procedure and promote sun safety behaviours during family orientation activities and via centre communication channels.
- Consider sun protective strategies when planning emergency evacuation drills, incursions, excursions, and centre events.
- Display the Sun Safety Poster in prominent areas visible to children, families, and team members.

**Teachers and educators will:**

- Be sun safety role models.
- Involve children in age-appropriate discussions about sun safety, the dangers of the sun, including hot outdoor surfaces.
- Monitor local weather and UV levels and sun protection times via the SunSmart app.
- Where practical, minimise time outdoors when the UV level is high to extreme (UV 6 or above) i.e. plan indoor activities, verandah, or shade-covered outdoor play.
- Provide children with easy access to clean drinking water and encourage regular hydration.
- Drink water regularly.
- When possible, reduce reflective surfaces in the outdoor environment.
- Report sunburn, heat-related illness, burns, failed critical cooling or shade controls, and related near misses in accordance with the applicable child incident reporting and WHS reporting procedures.

## Five SunSmart Strategies

### 1. Slip on sun protective clothing

SunSmart clothing is loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible i.e. shirts that cover the neck and shoulders, and longer style shorts or skirts.

**Teachers and educators will:**

- Wear SunSmart clothing when attending work.
- Provide parents/guardians with SunSmart clothing information upon and throughout enrolment.
- Encourage parents/guardians to dress children in SunSmart clothing.
- When appropriate, assist children to choose SunSmart clothing.
- Keep a supply of spare SunSmart clothing available for children.

**Parents/Guardians will:**

- Dress their child in SunSmart clothing suitable for the weather.
- Provide a spare set of SunSmart clothing daily for their child; clearly labelled with child's name.

### 2. Slop on sunscreen

SunSmart sunscreen is SPF50+, broad-spectrum and water-resistant.

**Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge will:**

- Keep sunscreen Safety Data Sheets in the centre Chemical Register folder.

- Ensure there is an adequate supply of SPF50+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen available for communal use.
- Print a *Sunscreen Register* for each room/group daily. Refer to [Creating and Printing a Weekly Roll and Sunscreen Record](#).

## Teachers and educators will:

- Set up a sunscreen station daily with a mirror, tissues, and pictorial prompts.
- For children 6 months and older\*:
  - Apply a generous amount (about 7 teaspoons or 35mls) to clean, dry skin, at least 20 minutes before sun exposure.
  - When developmentally appropriate, support and supervise children from 3 years to apply their own sunscreen.
  - When applying sunscreen to more than one child, use a different tissue for each child.
  - When applying sunscreen to a child with a skin condition/illness, wear gloves.
  - Reapply sunscreen to yourself and children every 2hrs or more regularly when washed off when spending outdoors.
- Wash hands and support children to wash their hands after applying sunscreen.
- Record children's sunscreen applications on the *Sunscreen Register*.
- When not in use, store sunscreen in a location that is cool, out of direct sunlight and inaccessible to children.
- When requested (in writing via [Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Cream and Ointment Authorisation Record](#)) and supplied by parents/guardians, apply 'home sunscreen' to their child. Promptly inform parents/guardians when sunscreen supply will soon expire, is expired, or is low. Obtain SDS for sunscreen and add to *Chemical Register*.
- Discard expired sunscreen products.
- When a parent/guardian has not provided written authorisation (via *Enrolment Booklet/Online Form*) to apply sunscreen to their child, implement the four remaining SunSmart strategies.

*\*Cancer Council and Qld Health do not recommend sunscreen for infants under 6mths of age.*

## Parents/Guardians will:

- When possible, apply sunscreen to their child at home before leaving home for centre. If not possible, apply sunscreen to their child upon arrival at the centre.
- Record child's sunscreen application on *Sunscreen Register*.
- If requesting to use an alternative sunscreen complete the authorisation form ([Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Cream and Ointment Authorisation Record](#)), provide their child a sunscreen product of their choice; clearly labelled with child's name, meets [Australian Regulatory Guidelines for Sunscreens](#) and is SPF50+, broad-spectrum and water-resistant. Maintain a supply and replace promptly when requested.

## 3. Slap on a hat

A SunSmart hat is a board-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hat that shades the face, nose, neck, and ears.

## Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge will:

- Maintain an adequate supply of spare SunSmart hats for communal use.
- Advise parents/guardians to provide a SunSmart hat daily for the child, upon and throughout enrolment.
- Communicate [KidSafe](#) and [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#) guidance with parents/guardian and centre team members regarding entrapment risks of hats and other clothing with neck drawstrings/toggles, upon and throughout enrolment.

## Teachers and educators will:

- Wear a SunSmart hat when outdoors.
- Store hats in a location where children can easily access.
- Support children to wear hats in the sun; provide spare hats if needed.
- When outdoors, encourage children without hats to play in the shade, under verandah or indoors.
- Tuck cords/toggles under hats or seek parental consent to remove them.
- Launder spare hats between individual use.

## Parents/Guardians will:

- Provide a clearly labelled SunSmart hat for their child daily.

## 4. Seek shade

Be SunSmart; Seek natural, built, and portable shade when outdoors.

## Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge will:

- Factor in available natural and portable shade when planning evacuation drills, incursions, excursions, and centre events.
- Conduct periodic assessments of shade and UV reflective surfaces to inform long-term shade goals for playground improvements. Branch Centres track goals via their *10-Year Enhanced Physical Environment Plan*.

## Teachers and educators will:

- Support children to identify and seek shade when spending time outside.
- Consider shade when setting up outdoor equipment. When needed, reposition moveable equipment and shade structures to maximise access to shade; remove/pack-away or restrict access to equipment during periods of hot temperatures.
- Minimise infant exposure to direct sunlight; plan indoor activities or shade-covered outdoor play between 10am and 3pm and when UV index is above 3.
- Minimise and adjust outdoor routines when UV level is high to extreme (6 or above).

## 5. Slide on sunglasses

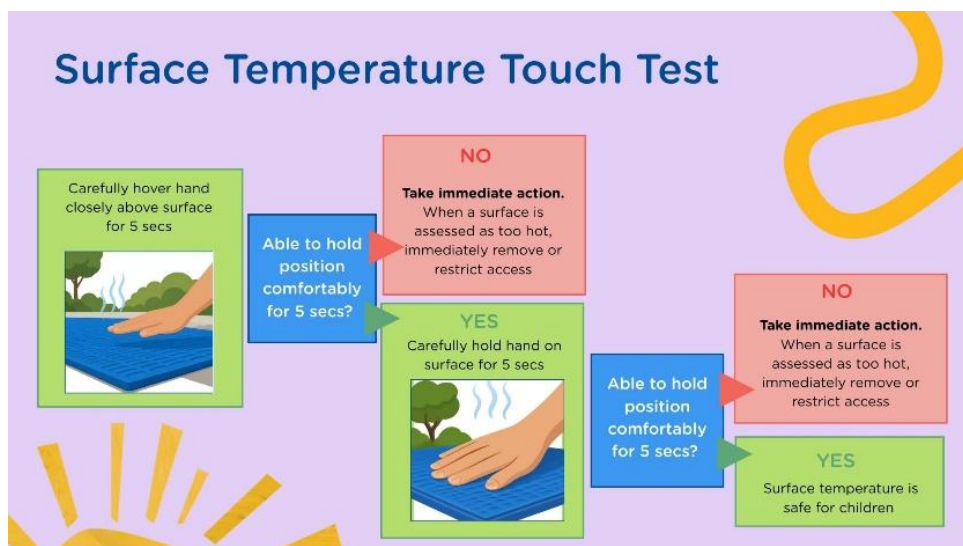
SunSmart sunglasses are close-fitting wraparound sunglasses that meet Australian Standard AS/NSZ 1067. Sunglasses are encouraged but optional for children, teachers, educators, and visitors.

## Hot outdoor surfaces

**Warning:** Outdoor surfaces can heat up rapidly and retain heat, which can cause serious burns. Outdoor surfaces that may attract and retain heat include:

- wood
- concrete
- stone
- rubber
- safety mats
- synthetic grass
- metal
- brick
- sand
- plastic
- loose soft fall

A 'surface temperature touch test' is completed to assess the safety of outdoor surfaces identified as attracting and retaining heat.



## Teachers and educators will:

- Identify and document outdoor surfaces that attract and retain heat, which pose a potential risk of serious burns in centre *Outdoor Environment Risk Assessment*.
- Where practically possible, place movable equipment out of direct sunlight, and reposition as the sun moves.

### Periods of warm weather

- Periodically complete a **surface temperature touch test** of known high-risk surfaces.
- When a surface is assessed as too hot, immediately remove or restrict access.

### Weather above 30°C

- Complete a **surface temperature touch test** of known high-risk surfaces:
  - before children go outdoors.
  - every 20mins when outdoors.
- When a surface is assessed as too hot, remove or restrict access.
- Adjust outdoor routines when needed.

### Weather above 35°C

- Adjust outdoor routines to minimise time in sun.
- Complete a **surface temperature touch test** of known high-risk surfaces:
  - before children go outdoors.
  - every 20mins when outdoors
- When a surface is assessed as too hot, remove or restrict access.
- Direct children to wear shoes.
- In consultation with Director/RPIC, implement additional controls to minimise risk e.g. closing high-risk areas, restricting play to verandah and/or shorten time spent outdoors and/or transition children indoors.

**Note:** Infra-red surface thermometers are unreliable. Completing a **surface temperature touch test**, as detailed above, is the preferred method to assess the safety of outdoor surfaces. If using an infra-red surface temperature thermometer, follow manufacture operating instructions. A surface temperatures of above 45°C may be too hot for children. Always follow up an infra-red surface temperature thermometer check with a surface temperature touch test.

## Heatwaves

Heatwaves involve prolonged periods of unusually high temperatures and/or humidity that can pose a significant risk to children's health. Young children and older adults are particularly vulnerable in heatwave conditions.

### Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge will:

- Monitor local weather forecasts and heatwave warnings.
- Communicate significant heatwave conditions and any changes to routines with families and team members.
- For centres with water pumps, keep emergency drinking water supplies i.e. 10-litre bottles of water. Often electricity supplies are interrupted during heatwave conditions.
- Ensure air conditioners, fans and other cooling systems are operational and serviced as required. Complete an maintenance request when needed.

### Teachers and educators will:

- Monitor children and adults closely for signs of heat-related illness and dehydration, with additional consideration for children and adults with medical conditions, and pregnant women.
- Respond promptly to signs of heat-related illness in accordance with first aid training and children's medical management plans.
- Modify or suspend outdoor activities and physical activities when conditions pose a health risk.
- Keep indoor environments as cool as practicable by using air conditioning and fans, closing blinds, and limiting the entry of hot air where appropriate.
- Ensure cool, accessible drinking water is available and regularly encourage children to drink.
- Encourage children to remain in shaded areas and wear appropriate loose-fitting clothing.
- Ensure children wear appropriate footwear when outdoors.
- Use cool, damp washers or sponges where appropriate to support children to remain comfortable.
- Ensure centre animals have adequate shade, drinking water and ventilation.

## References and acknowledgements

- Cancer Council:
  - [\*Applying Sunscreen in an Early Childhood Setting\*](#)
  - [\*Schools and Early Childhood Sun Protection Policy Guide\*](#)
  - [\*Sun protection and young children\*](#)
  - [\*Sun Safety\*](#)
  - [\*Sunscreen tips for early childhood\*](#)
  - [\*SunSmart in schools and early childhood\*](#)
- Kidsafe:
  - [\*How Hot is Too Hot? Preventing Burns on Playgrounds\*](#)
  - [\*Position Statement - Sun Protection and Infants\*](#)
- Queensland Early Childhood Education and Care: [\*Hot day, safe play\*](#)
- Queensland Health: [\*Early Childhood Sun Safety\*](#)
- Queensland Health: [\*How to keep your baby safe from the sun\*](#)

This Procedure is reviewed every 2 years and reflects Cancer Council sun protection recommendations. Teacher, educators, and centre stakeholders are encouraged and invited to provide feedback about this procedure via [policyfeedback@candk.asn.au](mailto:policyfeedback@candk.asn.au). This procedure is available via the [C&K Website](#). A copy of this procedure can be provided upon request.