Sun Protection Guidelines
for Early Years & Childcare Settings
in Caerphilly County Borough

Produced by Caerphilly Local Public Health Team
The 21st century has seen temperatures in the UK rising and most recently the record breaking temperatures experienced in April 2007. Climate change is a topic regularly discussed in the media and with continuing unpredictable weather patterns the need for sun protection provision needs to be addressed virtually all year round.

The implementation of a sun protection policy has the potential to reduce the level of sun exposure. It is important that early years and childcare settings provide adequate sun protection within their establishment as the children will be at the nursery or pre-school for the most part during the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm) often for up to five days a week. Members of staff also have a key role to play in that they will have contact with the parents and are important in disseminating key sun awareness messages and practices, and can highlight the dangers of over exposure to the sun. By adopting a sun protection policy it is hoped that other effects of over exposure to the sun like heatstroke will also be avoided. By making small changes to the way we behave in the sun and taking simple measures to protect the skin can decrease the risk of skin cancer. The effects of too much sun exposure may not manifest for many years after and with warmer and more unpredictable weather experienced year on year it is time to act now in relation to sun exposure.

Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist early years and childcare settings for young children to develop sun protection policies to provide adequate sun protection provision.

Children have delicate skin that can burn easily and young children are unable to take responsibility for their own sun protection. Therefore, parents, guardians and those caring for children have a responsibility to ensure that they are protected from the harmful effects of the sun. It is also hoped that from a young age children will start to develop a healthy behaviour towards staying safe in the sun and that they will be able to follow through into their school years. Guidelines will also be developed for Infant, Primary and Secondary schools so that there is a continuation of sun protection provision throughout the child and adolescent years.
incidental exposure to the sun for a few minutes a day, combined with dietary intake of vitamin D, provides adequate vitamin D throughout the year (WHO, 2006). Excessive sun exposure does not lead to more vitamin D production (Hollis, 2005) therefore, for the large majority the prevention of overexposure to UV radiation remains the main health concern (WHO, 2006).

Hydration

As well as increasing the chance of sunburn exposure to the sun, due to the associated hot temperatures, can cause dehydration. Therefore, implementing a sun protection policy can help to address this issue.

Dehydration can cause children to become irritable, tired and less able to concentrate. The standard recommendation is to drink at least 6-8 glasses (1.5 – 2 litres) of water a day, drunk regularly throughout the day ensuring that plenty of additional fluid is drunk during warm weather and/or when doing any physical activity.

Facts on skin cancer

The incidence of skin cancer has been increasing over the last 20 years (Lens and Dawes, 2004). It is one of the most common forms of cancer in the UK (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006) but is largely a preventable disease.

Although skin cancer is rare in childhood it is the damage caused to young skin that can contribute most to the risk in later life, with skin cancer appearing increasingly in young adults (Office of National Statistics, 2000). Babies and children need extra protection from the sun because their skin is delicate and easily damaged. Sunburn in childhood can double the risk of skin cancer in later life (Mackie and Hole, 1996 and Weinstock et al 1989). The damage will not be seen immediately because skin cancer can take years to develop. But children who are exposed to the sun now may be storing up problems for the future.

Further information on skin cancer can be found at appendix one.

Vitamin D and sun exposure

Vitamin D is produced by our bodies when the skin is exposed to UV rays. It is also present in some foods including eggs, oily fish, fish liver oils and some fortified cereals.

Vitamin D is necessary for calcium absorption for healthy bones and teeth. A lack of vitamin D in extreme circumstances can cause rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults. This balance between minimising UV exposure to the detriment of vitamin D production has been looked at by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2006). The WHO states that for the majority of the population,
Sun protection provision in Caerphilly County Borough

In 2006 Caerphilly Local Public Health Team conducted a survey of schools in the borough to map the level of sun protection within the schools.

The questionnaire was used to establish the level of environmental protection and education in schools in relation to sun protection. Over half of the schools responded and upon analysis of the questionnaires it became apparent that sun protection provision varied from school to school and prompted the need for Sun Protection Guidelines.

SunSmart Campaign

The SunSmart campaign is the UK’s national skin cancer prevention campaign. SunSmart is commissioned by the UK Health Departments including the Welsh Assembly Government and is run by Cancer Research UK.

Each year Caerphilly Local Public Health Team receives resources from the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the campaign. Previous campaigns have focused on particular high risk groups including children and young people and outdoor workers.

The five key messages of sun smart are:

- **Stay in the shade**
- **Make sure you never burn**
- **Always cover up – wear a t-shirt, hat and wraparound sunglasses**
- **Remember children burn more easily**
- **Then use at least factor 15+ sunscreen with UVA and UVB coverage protection.**
It is important to note that the role of sunscreen in preventing skin cancer is uncertain. Sunscreens do prevent sunburn but more work needs to be carried out to determine their role in preventing skin cancer. Sunscreen is useful for covering exposed areas of skin when shade and protective clothing are not practical e.g. during outdoor swimming, PE lessons and school excursions. Sunscreens on their own do not necessarily make the sun safe but their use should be encouraged as part of the broader strategy to keeping safe in the sun.

Development of these guidelines

These guidelines have been modelled on ‘Cancer Research UK’s SunSmart Guidelines for Nurseries and Pre-schools© 2004’ and modified locally by Caerphilly Local Public Health Team through incorporating examples of best practice to support current evidence for the prevention of skin cancer.

Some qualitative data suggested that a major obstacle in implementing policies was gaining parental support (Schofield et al, 1993 and Giles-Corti et al, 2004) therefore a collaborative approach needs to be carried out when implementing the policies with both carers and parents.

Engaging all stakeholders in policy development and gaining ongoing commitment to its implementation is critical to the success of the policy.
The guidelines have been produced as a CD pack and this will enable you to adopt the guidelines to your particular early years and childcare setting. The guidelines also include a standard letter for you to amend and include your logo. You can then send this letter to all parents informing them of your commitment to sun protection.

Implementing the Policy

In order to have commitment from both parents and staff to implement the policy it is important they be involved in the development stage as much as possible.

It may be worth looking at what is already happening in relation to sun protection and think about the following:

- How long children currently spend outdoors during 11am-3pm?
- What is the current shade provision?
- Are staff and children wearing appropriate clothing?
- Is sunscreen encouraged and correctly used during the day?
- Is sun safety incorporated into learning?
Prepare a draft of your policy in consultation with staff and parents and make sure it is relevant to your particular early years setting. Get feedback on the policy and present the final draft to key decision makers for their approval. The policy needs to be realistic and within your allocated budget and timescale. Responsibilities for implementing the tasks within the policy need to be made clear to those that will be carrying them out. When implementing the policy, publicise it so everyone is aware of what you are trying to achieve and why. Give regular updates on the progress you are making through, for example, open days, letters to parents, newsletters etc.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

_Evaluation is useful because it can help you to monitor how effective your sun awareness 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 staff and parents
- Monitor incidents of sunburn to see if they are decreasing

You will find that your policy will change over time. It is important to keep updating your plans. Plans to monitor the policies online are currently being developed. Monitoring and evaluating your policy will help you to make effective changes.

The checklist within your pack has been designed to help you to start thinking about sun protection issues. These are suggestions – not all of them will be suitable for every early years and childcare setting. They can be reviewed annually and new recommendations added. Once you have decided in partnership with staff and parents which recommendations you are going to implement you can include them in your policy. An example has been developed for you to use and is included in your pack.
## Sun Protection Guidelines
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### Websites

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Useful Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SunSmart Campaign</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sunsmart.org.uk">www.sunsmart.org.uk</a></td>
<td>The UK’s national skin cancer campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bad.org.uk">www.bad.org.uk</a></td>
<td>The professional organisation of Dermatologists representing skin specialists in the United Kingdom and Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cmo.wales.gov.uk">www.cmo.wales.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The pages of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales has information about a range of health issues including skin cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Challenge Wales</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk/healthchallenge">www.wales.gov.uk/healthchallenge</a></td>
<td>Health Challenge Wales from the Welsh Assembly Government is about better health and well being. It provides a national focus, and encourages everyone to work together to create a healthier nation. It is a call to everyone - all people and organisations - to do as much as they can to improve health. There are a series of promotional merchandise that can be purchased including child legionnaires sun hats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Protection Division</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hpa.org.uk/radiation">www.hpa.org.uk/radiation</a></td>
<td>Part of the Health Protection Agency the Radiation Protection Division. Provides information on UV data and has an animated interactive ‘Sunsense’ section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through Landscapes</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ltl.org.uk">www.ltl.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Learning through Landscapes helps schools and early years settings make the most of their outdoor spaces for play and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gavowales.org.uk">www.gavowales.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Supports the voluntary sector in Gwent and has information on any funding opportunities for the voluntary sector.</td>
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Possible Sources of Funding and further suggestions

Some actions chosen will have no funding implications, for example, timetabling of outdoor activities. For other actions it may be necessary to source funding. Below is a list of some useful tips on sourcing additional funding.

• Check with your funding body whether they would be willing to provide additional money for sun protection

• Organise a fund raising event with parents to raise money for things like gazebos.

• Contact a local business to see whether they would be willing to sponsor things like long sleeved t-shirts or hats. Using a local builder may have the benefit of raising the awareness of sun protection to their own employees including those that work outdoors.

• Contact GAVO to see if there are community projects that could be carried out within your nursery to provide shade. Contact GAVO on 01443 863540 for further information.

• Keep up to date on any funding opportunities that may be available from the Local Authority or the Welsh Assembly Government.

Teaching Tool Kits

There are currently various resources available that may be useful to support promoting sun protection in the early years and childcare settings. Some examples are listed below:

Documents

A Primary Teaching Tool Kit, World Health Organisation 2003

Saving Our Skin Tool Kit
Raising awareness of the risk of skin cancer, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health 2005

Resources

Caerphilly Local Public Health Team has a series of sun protection information leaflets, posters and resources for professionals and the public to use.

To access these resources contact the Resource Library on 01495 241274 or e-mail CaerphillyLPHT@nphs.wales.nhs.uk
References

Cancer Research UK (2005)


Appendix One

According to Cancer Research UK the incidence of skin cancer has almost tripled since the 1980’s. The collection of data for cancer statistics is complex as national cancer statistics exclude non-melanoma skin cancers.

In total, there are over 75,000 new cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year in the UK with over 2,300 people dying from skin cancer each year (Cancer Research UK). In 2005 the incidence of malignant melanoma in Wales for males was 14.74 per 100,000 and 17.56 per 100,000 for females (Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit, 2007).

Tackling cancer is one of the Welsh Assembly Government’s top health priorities and is a key component of Designed for Life, published in May 2005, which sets out the Welsh Assembly Government’s long-term approach to health and social care. It aims to reduce the overall mortality of cancer in those aged below 75 years by 20 per cent by 2012 (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) and by implementing a sun protection policy could be a step closer to reaching this target.

Types of skin cancer

There are various types of skin cancer that fall within two categories:

- Malignant melanoma – less common but the cause of most skin cancer deaths
- Non-melanoma skin cancer – includes basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma

Malignant melanoma

Cutaneous malignant melanoma is a cancer of the pigment cells of the skin.

This is the most serious form of skin cancer but if detected early it can be treated successfully. But if left untreated it can spread to other parts of the body and be fatal.

Melanoma affects adults of all ages. It is one of the few cancers to affect young adults and is the third most common cancer amongst 15-39 year olds (Office for National Statistics, 2000). However the risk increases with age and more women than men develop malignant melanoma (Health Development Agency, 2002). Melanomas in women are most common on the legs and in men they are most common on the back.
Non-melanoma

These are the most common and easily treated type of cancer and there are two main types; Basal and Squamous.

They can occur on any part of the body but mainly occur on areas frequently exposed to the sun such as the head, neck, hands and forearms.

**Basal** – these grow slowly and usually start as a small round or flattened lump. Lumps may be red, pale or pearly in colour. Sometimes they can appear as a scaly, eczema-like patch on the skin.

**Squamous** – this is more serious than the basal cell and can be spread to other parts of the body if left untreated. They can appear as persistent red scaly spots, lumps, sores or ulcers, which may bleed easily.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is known to cause skin cancer. High levels of exposure to UV radiation increase both the major forms of skin cancer, and approximately 65% to 90% of melanomas are caused by UV radiation exposure (Glanz and Saraiya, 2005; Murphy, 2002; Ortonne, 2002).

The effects of the amount and pattern of sunlight exposure in causing melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer are complex. While most skin cancers are thought to be due to UV radiation exposure, other factors in addition to excessive sun exposure can contribute to the risk including:

- having fair skin that burns easily and blue eyes
- Tendency to freckle
- Personal or family history of skin cancer
- individuals with a high number of moles
- Working outdoors for lengthy periods of time
- excessive use of solaria, sunlamps and sunbeds over long periods of time.

For more information on skin cancer go to Cancer Research UK at [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org) or the British Association of Dermatology at [www.bad.org.uk](http://www.bad.org.uk)