

 MACQUARIE University	<h1>SUN PROTECTION</h1>	Work Area:	Early Learning, Vac Care & Junior Science Academy
		Contact Officer:	Business Operations Manager, Early Learning
		Revision Number:	6
<h2>Policy</h2>		Last Modified:	May 2026

PURPOSE	To ensure sun protection practices are in place to educate and protect children, staff and visitors while attending an Early Learning centre, Vacation Care, or Junior Science Academy.
OVERVIEW	<p>The vast majority of skin cancers, including melanoma, are caused by over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.</p> <p>The World Health Organisation has cautioned that ‘children’s UV exposure should be carefully limited because they are in a dynamic state of growth and therefore more susceptible to environmental threats than adults. Many vital functions such as the immune system are not fully developed at birth, and unsafe environments may interfere with their normal development’ (who.int/health-topics/ultraviolet-radiation#tab=tab_2).</p> <p>Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation in childhood is a major risk factor for developing skin cancer later in life. Effective strategies can help protect staff and children from UV radiation and teach children good sun protection habits from an early age.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <p>Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum between 100 nanometres (nm) and 400nm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘UVA’ – UVR in the range 315nm to 400nm is thought to contribute to premature aging and wrinkling of the skin and has been implicated as a cause of skin cancer. • ‘UVB’ – UVR in the range 280nm to 315nm is more dangerous than UVA and has been implicated as the major cause of skin cancers, sunburning and cataracts. • ‘UVC’ – UVR in the range 100nm to 280nm is extremely dangerous but does not reach the earth’s surface due to absorption in the atmosphere by ozone <p>Ultraviolet Index (UVI) is a measure of the level of UVR ranging from 1-2 (Low) to 11 + (Extreme). The higher the UVI, the greater the potential for damage to the skin and eyes, and the less time it takes for harm to occur. Sun protection measures are recommended when the UVI is 3 and above.</p> <p>Sun protection factor (SPF) is the Australian standard for sunscreen; the SPF indicates the level of protection provided against UVR.</p> <p>Sun protection times are when sun protection measures are recommended, i.e. when the UVI is 3 and above.</p>
RESPONSIBILITY/SCOPE	U@MQ Ltd Approved Services (Early Learning Centres, Vacation Care) and the Junior Science Academy
THE POLICY	

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Guiding Principles

- The safety, health, and wellbeing of children is our number one priority. Our educators and staff implement policies and procedures to protect children from UV radiation from the sun, as well as burns from exposure to surfaces heated by the sun.
- Outdoor play experiences are an important part of our children’s healthy growth, learning, wellbeing, and development. We ensure that the outdoor environment offers shade and that other sun protection measures are implemented by staff.
- We create opportunities for children to learn and develop, and this includes incorporating sun protection awareness into the program.
- Our staff role model best practice in relation to sun safety.
- We consider families as valuable partners in promoting the importance of sun protection.
- Sun protection measures are recommended when the UVI is 3 and above

Outdoor Activities

Cancer Council’s advice is to promote outdoor play while being SunSmart. Sun protection practices are required all year round. Outdoor activities will be minimised at times with highest UVI and, if they do take place, they will be undertaken in shaded areas wherever possible. Sun protection measures (including hats, protective clothing, sunscreen, and shade) will be implemented when UV levels reach 3 or above. UV levels and daily sun protection times will guide the planning of daily activities and outdoor events, both on-site and off-site. Outdoor play in direct sunlight will be minimised when UV levels are at peak.

Ultraviolet Index (UVI)

- Sun protection times are a forecast for the time-of-day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types and the sun safe practices in this policy should be implemented. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year.
- Average annual, monthly and seasonal values of the UV Index are available on [the Bureau of Meteorology](#) website. Further advice specific to states and territories is available on the [Cancer Council](#) website.
- UV levels peak in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. Where possible, outdoor activities should be scheduled away from times when UV levels are most damaging.
- Staff will check the UVI and refer to the UVI rating system below prior to going outdoors with children.

UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index	UV index
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+	
Low		Moderate			High		Very high			Extreme	
You can safely stay outside!		Seek shade during midday hours! Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat!					Avoid being outside during midday hours! Make sure you seek shade! Shirt, sunscreen and hat are a must!				

☐ The UV Index, a rating system adopted from the World Health Organization, describes the amount of UV radiation at the Earth’s surface.

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The sun protection measures listed below are used for all outdoor activities:

- **Shade**

- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural, and fixed shade. Adequate shade for outdoor play will be provided and maintained.
- Where possible, outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas. Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.

- **Hats**

- Staff and children are required to wear sun-safe hats that protect their face, neck, and ears when outdoors.
- The following styles are recommended:
 - A Legionnaire hat
 - Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5 cm (6cm for adults)
 - Broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6 cm (7.5cm for adults)
- Baseball caps or visors are not recommended as they do not provide enough protection from the sun.
- Children are required to bring a sun-safe hat from home for each day of attendance. Spare hats, washed between use, will be kept by the service for children to use when they do not have their own hat.

- **Clothing**

- When outdoors, staff and children will wear sun safe clothing that covers as much skin as possible, particularly covering the shoulders, back and stomach.
- Shoulders must always be covered. No singlet/midriff/cropped tops or clothing with narrow/shoestring straps are permitted unless worn over an item of clothing that covers the shoulders.
- Families will be provided with information on appropriate sun safe clothing upon enrolment and throughout the year. Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing will be provided with spare clothes and their parents will be reminded of appropriate clothing requirements.
- As with all our practices, we will respect each child as an individual, respecting their diverse cultures and religious backgrounds while still actively protecting them against the sun's harmful rays.

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- **Sunglasses (if practical)**
 - Where children or staff choose to wear sunglasses, it is recommended they wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

- **Sunscreen**
 - A broad-based water-resistant sunscreen will be provided by the centre/program for children's use, SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum. It will be stored in a cool, dry place, and expiry dates monitored. Before introducing new sunscreen, staff will conduct a usage/patch test per Cancer Council recommendations.
 - Permission to use this sunscreen will be sought from families upon enrolment. If permission is not given, the family will be asked to supply a suitable alternative and complete the Administration of Creams form.
 - Where children have allergies or [sensitivities to sunscreen](#), parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen and complete the Administration of Creams form.
 - Families are asked to ensure sunscreen is applied to their child upon arrival and staff will ensure it is reapplied during the day as required.
 - Children aged 3-12 years will be encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff to ensure correct and adequate application.
 - Where possible, sunscreen will be applied to children 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours or more frequently after sweating, towel drying or waterplay, in line with Cancer Council recommendations.

- If a parent or guardian does not consent to sunscreen application, the situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Centre Manager. Alternative sun protection strategies will be discussed, and any agreed-upon measures will be documented to ensure the child's safety

Infants and the Sun

Infants under 12 months will not be exposed to direct sunlight and are to remain in dense shade (i.e., no direct sun and little or no reflected sun) when outside. They will wear sun safe hats and clothing and small amounts of SPF 50 or SPF50+ sunscreen may be applied to the exposed skin of infants over 6 months, post parental approval.

Role Modelling

Staff will act as role models and demonstrate sun safe behaviour by:

- Wearing a sun-safe hat outdoors
- Wearing sun safe clothing
- Applying SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors

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- Using and promoting shade
- Drinking plenty of water regularly even if you don't feel thirsty

Families and visitors will be encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour when on centre/program premises or participating in centre/program activities.

Excursions

For excursions, sun protection must be considered as part of excursion risk assessments. Sun protection practices will be planned, organised, understood, and implemented, including access to appropriate shade and other protective measures,

Risk Assessments

UV radiation exposure will be assessed as part of the service's risk management practices for outdoor events and activities, both on-site and off-site, to ensure all children and staff are adequately protected from harmful UV exposure.

Education and Information

Sun protection will be incorporated regularly into the educational program and promoted to staff, families, and visitors. Resources and further information are available from Cancer Council NSW's website www.cancerCouncil.com.au/sunsmart.

Children will be encouraged to actively participate in sun protection initiatives and model best practices. This includes taking leadership roles such as checking daily UV levels using the SunSmart App, reminding peers to wear hats, and assisting with sunscreen routines.

Families will receive reminders about Sun Safe practices and weather appropriate clothing as the temperatures/seasons change. This applies to Approved Services only.

Implementation and Review

The Centre or Program Manager will lead the implementation and engagement of the sun protection policy at their Centre or Program. For Approved Services, the Compliance Officer will regularly monitor how effectively services apply the policy and in consultation with the Centre Manager conduct an annual shade assessment and review the effectiveness of sun protection practices.

Sun protection policies will be updated and submitted to Cancer Council NSW every three years to maintain SunSmart status.

Policy Information

Contact Officer (Role Title)	Business Operations Manager, Early Learning
Date Approved	July 2012
Approval Authority	CEO of U@MQ Ltd. (Campus Life)

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(Role Title)	
Date of Commencement	July 2012
Amendment History	May 2013; May 2014; Nov 2018, Oct 2025, May 2026
Date for Next Review	Dec 2028
Related Documents	<p><u>Policies and Procedures and Forms</u> Excursion and Regular Outings Policy Excursion Authorisation Form Excursion Permission Form Standing Permission to Administer Medication Form</p> <p><u>Legislation</u> Education and Care Services National Regulations - Section 167 - Regulation 100, 101, 113, 114, 116, 168 (2)(a)(ii) – 172</p> <p><u>Other</u> ACECQA – Sun Protection Policy Guidelines Cancer Council NSW – Sun Protection Policy recommendations National Quality Standards (NQS)-QA1-QA7</p>
Policies superseded by this	Previously known as Sun Safety Policy
Keywords	Sunburn, UV, Cancer Council, shade, hats, outdoor play