# Sun Safety

## Policy Statement

This Policy outlines Meerilinga's commitment to sun protection and our responsibility to protect the children, Educators, staff and visitors to the Centre from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Our Early Learning Programs are recognised as a Sunsmart Centres by the Cancer Council of Western Australia.

## Policy Purpose

This policy provides guidelines to:

- Ensure all children, educators, students, volunteers and staff are well protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of the sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- Ensure there is some UV exposure for vitamin D.
- Ensure the outdoor environment is sun safe and provides adequate shade.
- Ensure children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills.
- Support duty of care and regulatory requirements.
- Support appropriate WHS strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harm for children and adults.

## Scope

This policy applies to families, workers, students, volunteers and visitors engaged with Meerilinga.

## Exclusions

## Policy Review

Biennial or from time to time when the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operations and customer service.

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| **Policy Reviewed** | **11 March 2025** | **By** | **Advisor Policy & Compliance** |
| **Approved By** | **Chief Executive Officer** | | |
| **Previous Review** | **13 March 2023** | | |

**Implementation**
In accordance with Regulation 168 Meerilinga's Sun Protection guidelines have been developed to enable children, workers, students, volunteers and visitors of Meerilinga Services are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet (UV) sun radiation. Services will maintain the Sunsmart recognition through annual assessment of adherence.

**Outdoor Activity**
The service will use a combination of the five (5) sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
Cancer Council Factsheet on *Be SunSmart* at:
http://www.cancer.org.au/Healthprofessionals/patientfactsheets/Lifestyle/Be_sunsmart.htm

The UV index forecast will be sourced and noted daily for educators, staff and students to refer to - https://www.myuv.com.au/

Lead Educators will assess the risk of continuing to play outdoors when the UV level reaches very high (8) and above. Attentive to children's safety and comfort, decisions are made in the interest of the children's wellbeing.

Some sun exposure is important for vitamin D which is essential for healthy bones and muscles, and for general health. Between August and May, most Western Australians can get enough vitamin D through incidental sun exposure in their day to day activities. During this period the focus should be on sun protection.

In Australia, sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency https://www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/sunsmart/vitamindandsunprotection/

All sun protection measures will be considered when planning special outdoor events within the centre, such as walks in the community and excursions. Plans or programs may need to be altered to ensure compliance of this policy.

**Shade**
- Adequate shade will be provided and maintained for outdoor play.
- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- Educators will consider the availability of shade when planning and implementing outdoor activities and excursions (such as verandas, pergolas, shade shelters, large leafy trees)
- Play activities may be moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- Shade does not guarantee total protection, so hats, protective clothing and sunscreen will also be used.

**Hats**

- Educators, staff, students, volunteers and children are required to wear a broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaires style hat that protects their face, neck, ears and crown of the head whenever they are outdoors.

- Adults and children without a sun safe hat will remain protected from the sun. They will be provided with a spare hat or participate in activities either under the verandah or indoors.

**Clothing**

- When outdoors, Educators, staff, students and children will wear clothing that covers their shoulders and protects as much of the skin as possible. Recommended clothing includes collars, elbow length sleeves, and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts. ***Please note: midriff or singlet top, thin strap dresses do not provide enough sun protection therefore are not recommended.***

  *Refer to Section 4 Policy – Employee Dress Code*

- Children without appropriate clothing will remain protected from the sun. Sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing or participate in activities either under the verandah or indoors.

**Sunscreen**

- All Educators, staff, students, volunteers and children will apply SPF30+ or higher broad-spectrum water resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and re-apply every 2 hours.
- A sunscreen station will be set up and accessible.
- The service will provide SPF 30+ or higher broad - spectrum water resistant sunscreen for the adults and children engaged in Meerilinga services.
- Families will be encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child prior to or upon arrival to the service.
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged and supported to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of an Educator or staff.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date monitored.
- If a child presents with a reaction to the services sunscreen, the family will be notified and asked to provide an alternative (non-reactive) sunscreen for their child to use at the service.

**Sunglasses**

- If practical, Educators, staff, students, volunteers and children are encouraged purchase and wear sunglasses that meet the Australian standard when outdoors. Sunglasses and a sun safe hat provide very good eye protection.

- Sunglasses that meet Australian Standards will be labelled with the Australian Standard number AS/NZS 1067.1:2016 or EPF10+ rating to ensure that the sunglasses block out sufficient UV radiation.

  *Note: Sunglasses sold as toys or fashion spectacles may not meet the Australian Standard.*

**Protective Practices**

Educators, staff, students and volunteers will be responsible for adhering to the strategies and practices of the Sun Protection policy and procedures. Those who do not comply will be in breach of this policy.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers will act as role models and demonstrate sun safe behaviour to families and children by:

- Wearing a sun safe hat (see Hats).
- Wearing sun safe clothing (see Clothing).
- Applying SPF30+ or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors.
- Using and promoting shade.

Through the process of enrolment into our service, families will be:

- Informed of the Sun Protection Policy.
- Required to give authority and directive for educators to administer the services sunscreen to their child or provide the service with an alternative if necessary.
- Required to dress their child in appropriate sun protective clothing and provide a suitable sun protective hat to remain at the service.
- Encouraged to practice sun protective behaviours themselves.

Educator, staff, students, volunteers and children's hydration levels will be maintained. Safe drinking water will be accessible to children throughout the day in both indoor and outdoor settings.

Educators, staff and students will be aware that broad brimmed hats with toggles may be a choking hazard to children.

Educators, staff and students will be aware of outdoor surfaces that may become very hot in the sun. Through the warmer months, Lead Educator will ensure Educators use a surface thermometer to check the outdoor play equipment and ground surfaces such as slides, metal climbing frames, paving and concrete etc. before the children transition outdoors. The Sun Protection Record is completed and signed at the time, by the person conducting the check.

**Education**

Learning about sun protection and ways to protect skin from UV exposure will be incorporated into the learning program. Educators will actively promote sun protection through discussion of activities undertaken with children.

Sun protection information will be promoted and the policy made available to Educators, staff, families, students and visitors of the service.