CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Children's Services

Sun Protection

Policy

Version: 9.0
Approved: 18 September 2026
Review due: September 2028
Document ID: 12011-018

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What do we believe?

At CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay, we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and hold this at the centre of our decision making and practice. We believe in the principle of paramountcy of the safety of children. This means that the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all decisions, actions, and practices. Where there is a conflict between the interests of a child and those of adults or the organisation, the child's safety and wellbeing will always come first.

We recognise that exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and contribute to skin cancer later in life, and that protecting children from excessive UV exposure is an important part of supporting their health and wellbeing. We believe effective sun protection is a shared responsibility and should be embedded into our everyday practices through a combination of protective clothing, appropriate hats, sunscreen, shade and thoughtful planning of outdoor experiences.

We believe children should be supported to develop knowledge, confidence and independence in managing their own sun protection, with educators modelling positive SunSmart behaviours and creating meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the importance of protecting themselves from the sun. We are committed to providing safe outdoor environments, meeting our duty of care and regulatory responsibilities, and working in partnership with children, families, educators, visitors and the wider community to promote consistent and proactive sun protection practices.

What are we going to do?

We will protect children, educators, staff, volunteers and visitors from excessive UV exposure by implementing consistent SunSmart practices whenever UV levels reach 3 or above. We will monitor daily UV levels and sun protection times, provide and maintain adequate shade, and ensure outdoor experiences are planned with consideration of UV exposure, weather conditions and the availability of protective environments. Children and educators will wear appropriate sun protective clothing and SunSmart hats, and SPF50+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen will be applied and reapplied as required. We will provide additional protection and modify outdoor activities when UV levels are high or extreme, including increasing access to shade, relocating activities or moving experiences indoors where necessary.

We will work with families to support individual sun protection needs and ensure children who do not have appropriate hats or clothing are still able to participate safely in protected areas. We will teach and encourage children to develop sun protection knowledge and independence through everyday conversations, learning experiences and leadership opportunities, while educators' model positive SunSmart behaviours. Regular risk assessments, shade assessments, staff training, family communication and review of our practices will support the ongoing implementation of effective sun protection across our services.

How will it be done?

Outdoor Activity

UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements. A combination of sun protection measures will be used whenever **the UV Index reaches 3 or higher**. These measures include:

- **Slip** on clothing that covers as much skin as possible

- **Slop** on sunscreen
- **Slap** on a hat
- **Seek** shade

Sun protection requirements will form part of all excursion and regular outing risk assessments. Educators will consider UV forecasts, shade availability, access to drinking water, sunscreen reapplication, protective clothing, hats, impact on temperature of play and outdoor equipment and the timing of activities. Where UV levels are high or extreme, activities may be modified, relocated, or rescheduled to minimise risk.

Shade

- All outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas where possible, where there is not suitable shade children will be encouraged to stay in their licensed indoor space.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing will be asked to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- The program will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns where possible.
- The service will maintain adequate shade for outdoor play whenever possible or limited time in the sun.
- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- Regular shade assessments will be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and quality of shade.
- Shade assessments will be reviewed following environmental changes, playground modifications, severe weather events, or where observations identify areas of inadequate protection from UV exposure.
- Risk assessments will be conducted to identify and minimise sun safety risks, including consideration of UV exposure during outdoor play, excursions, transitions, special events, impact on temperature of play and outdoor equipment and changes to the outdoor environment, these will be reviewed annually or as needed.
- When UV levels reach 8 or above, educators will minimise children's time in direct sunlight and, where practicable, reschedule outdoor activities to cooler periods of the day or utilise shaded environments. When UV levels are extreme (11+), outdoor activities will be carefully risk-assessed and may be relocated indoors.
- In Vacation Care Programs, as much as is possible, all activities will be conducted in shady areas. If this is not possible then sun safe hats and clothing MUST be worn. If any child does not have a sun safe hat or shirt, they will be directed to play in the shade or inside. Contingency planning for Vacation Care activities impacted by hot and /or sunny weather must be risk assessed before proceeding.
- Educators will ensure shade structures are monitored to ensure any maintenance required is reported, as per CatholicCare policies and practice guidelines. Regular shade assessments are to be used to assist in planning for additional shade.

Hats

- Educators, staff and children are required to wear SunSmart hats that protect their face, neck and ears. A SunSmart hat is:
    - Legionnaire hat;
    - Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm);
    - Broad-brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).
- Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and are not considered a suitable alternative.

- Children without a SunSmart hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat where one is available.

Clothing

- When outdoors, educators, staff and children will wear SunSmart clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. This includes wearing:
  - Loose-fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered necklines;
  - Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing SunSmart clothing will be encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors) or are provided with spare clothing.
- Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Sunscreen

- All staff and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours.
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged and supported to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of staff.
- Permission to apply sunscreen is included in the service enrolment form. If children have allergies or sensitivities to sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative SPF 50 sunscreen.
- All sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place, and the expiry date is monitored.

Babies

- Babies under 12 months will not be exposed to direct sunlight when UV levels are 3 or higher. When outside we will ensure they are in areas with dense shade, wear sun safe hats and clothing and have small amounts of sunscreen applied to exposed skin.
- Babies under 6 months of age, will not have sunscreen applied to their skin, and will not be exposed to direct sunlight when UV levels are 3 or higher
- Clothing, hats and shade positioning will be checked regularly to ensure that babies will be well protected from UV.
- We will ensure fluids are offered regularly.

Education

- Sun protection will be incorporated regularly into learning programs and role-modelled by educators.
- Children will be encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the service, including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection (e.g. accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen).
- Visitor, student and new employee inductions will embed the transfer of information relating to the service's Sun Protection Policy.
- Educators and staff will receive information, training, and updates regarding sun protection requirements, risk management strategies, and their responsibilities under this policy and as required in team meetings.

Role Modelling

Educators will role model sun protective practices. This means they will:

- Wear a sun safe hat at all times when outdoors. This includes a broad brimmed hat with a brim size of 7.5 cm, a legionnaire hat or a bucket style hat. Baseball style caps are not suitable and must not be worn.
- Wear protective clothing when outdoors. This includes clothing that protects the shoulders, back and stomach, as listed above.
- Use sunscreen when outdoors.

Risk Assessment

The service will ensure their service risk assessment includes sun protection to identify and minimise risks associated with UV exposure. Risk assessments will consider outdoor learning environments, excursions, transitions, special events, water play, sports activities, shade availability, impact on temperature of play and outdoor equipment and periods of high or extreme UV levels. Control measures will be implemented and reviewed to ensure children, educators, volunteers and visitors are protected from excessive UV exposure.

Taking Care During Extreme High Temperatures

During the hottest months and during extreme high temperatures, extra care will be taken. In addition to the procedures outlined in the rest of the document, this includes:

- Encouraging children to drink extra water,
- Ensure there is water available within the learning environment in additional to individual water bottles and bubblers.
- Ensuring children are kept as cool as possible,
- Setting up outdoor activities in shaded areas, if outside temperature is not deemed too hot for outdoor play, and
- Testing fixed outdoor equipment and ground cover to ensure it has not become overheated. This means that:
    1. Equipment will be made inaccessible to children if hot to touch.
    2. Children will be kept indoors if ground cover is hot to touch.

On an extremely hot day, if outdoor shaded areas are not sufficient to keep the children cool, educators will plan for alternative indoor play experiences for children.

Please also see the *Administration* of First aid policy, in conjunction with this policy.

Going on Excursions / Vacation Care Programs

When planning excursions educators will consider, as part of the risk assessment:

- The availability of shade at the excursion destination,
- The time of the year the excursion is being planned for, and
- The time of the day.

Educators will also ensure that when taking children on excursions:

- Families will be asked to sign an excursion authority letter, which details proposed clothing needs and proposed contingencies for the weather (including requirements for sunscreen application) for the excursion,
- Sunscreen is applied before leaving for the excursion. This must be re- applied every 2 hours,
- All children, educators and volunteers are wearing hats and clothing as described above, and
- They are kept in shaded areas as much as possible and as is practicable. Being in the sun for long periods will be avoided.
- During Vacation Care water activities, staff will be vigilant in ensuring sun protection shirts/rashies are worn. Staff will monitor children's exposure to the sun.

Please also see the *Excursion and Workshops Policy*, in conjunction with this policy.

Workplace Health & Safety

As part of WHS UV staff and visitors:

- Wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses
- Regularly apply sunscreen and
- Seek shade whenever possible.

Sun protection considerations and actions are included in risk assessments for excursions and excursion checklists.

Who is responsible?

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	• Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff follow the sun protection policy and procedures. • Ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play. • Ensure access to an adequate supply of sunscreen for children, educators and staff. • Ensure staff dress code/uniform includes sun protective clothing and hats. • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible and available to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families. • Ensure families are aware of, and agree to, support the service's sun protection policy and procedures.
Practice Manager	• Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff follow the sun protection policy and procedures. • Ensure access to an adequate supply of sunscreen for children, educators and staff. • Ensure staff dress code/uniform includes sun protective clothing and hats. • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible and available to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families. • Ensure families are aware of, and agree to, support the service's sun protection policy and procedures.

Roles	Responsibilities
Nominated Supervisor	• Ensure sun protection information is promoted to all staff, children, families and visitors. • Promote physical activity and active play while being SunSmart • Schedule outdoor activities away from times when the UV levels are most damaging • Provide support and advice to all staff with regard to the implementation of the Sun Protection Policy. • Implement the sun protection policy and procedures as outlined in the document. • Monitor the daily sun protection times for their location. • Support the implementation of sun protection measures during the sun protection times. • Ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play.
Educators	• Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Sun Protection Policy. • Educators and staff will act as role models and demonstrate SunSmart behaviour by: o Wearing a SunSmart hat (see Hats). o Wearing protective clothing and sunglasses (if practical) (see Clothing). o Applying SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every 2 hours after (see Sunscreen). o Using and promoting the use of shade. • Encouraging families and visitors to role model positive sun safe behaviours when at the service. • Access and display the local sun protection times via the UV widget - SunSmart free https://www.sunsmart.com.au/resources/sunsmart-app, Home - MyUV | MyUV, or the Bureau of Meteorology website. • Discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service. • Ensure that when outdoor activities are scheduled at times when the UV Index is forecast to be three (3) and above, maximum use of shade, sun protective hats, clothing and sunscreen should be applied to protect children and all stakeholders.
Parents / Guardians	• Dressing their child in cool clothing which covers as much skin as possible (e.g. tops that cover the shoulders, arms and chest, collared shirts, longer style shorts). • Providing a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears (e.g. wide brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style). • Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen supplied by the service to all exposed parts of my child's skin, including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs, or • Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum sunscreen (that is labelled with the child/children's name) to all exposed parts of the child's skin including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs. This sunscreen will be kept at the service, and it is the responsibility of the family to make sure there is always an adequate supply available. • Practising SunSmart behaviours when at the service.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health & Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration [NSW]
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Related documents

Children's Services policy

- *Excursion and Workshops Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy*

Resources

External

- *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) V2.0 2022*
- *My Time, Our Place; My Time, Our Place - Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTOP)*
- *ACECQA Sun protection policy and procedure guidelines (August 2021)*
- *Be SunSmart, Play SunSmart*
- *Suggested learning experiences for sun protection*

Glossary

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authorities

The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.

Child Paramountcy

Child paramountcy refers to the obligation to ensure that the best interests, safety, and wellbeing of children are paramount above all other considerations. All decisions, practices, and actions must prioritise the protection and wellbeing of children, particularly where competing interests exist.

ELC

All centre-based services for children aged 0-5 years including Long Day Care and Preschool services.

OSHC

Out of School Hours Care

Practice Manager

A practice manager oversees and supports a cluster of services within a local area. They work with the Nominated supervisor to ensure services operate safely, meet legal and quality requirements, and follow organisational policies. They do not work directly with children day to day.

UV (Ultraviolet) Radiation

Radiation from the sun that cannot be seen or felt and can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and contribute to skin cancer.

Risk Assessment

A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.

SunSmart

A set of sun protection practices that support people to reduce their exposure to harmful UV radiation.

UV Index

A measurement of the level of ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Sun protection is required when the UV Index reaches 3 or above.

Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this policy. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au.

Version	Authorised by	Approved date	Review cycle	Review due
9.0	General Manager Children's Services	18 September 2026	2 years	September 2028

Revision history

Version	Description	Author	Amendment date
9.0	Policy	Practice Manager – Quality, Compliance & Business Development	18 September 2026