



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Sun Safety Policy

Guidance

School employers are responsible for the health and safety of teaching and non teaching staff, pupils and others who may use school premises. Health and Safety legislation requires employers to have a written policy and to conduct risk assessments. The potential for prolonged exposure to the sun and the risk of sunburn while at school or on school outings should be considered as part of the risk assessment process and measures put in place to minimise the risk.

The steps that schools should be considering to protect pupils and staff from the sun can be summarised as follows:

1. Sun Protection Policy

During term time, pupils are in school during the peak UV hours five days a week. Having a sun protection policy can make a big difference to the amount of skin damage pupils experience. School policies are most effective when they are created with the help of the whole school community.

There are some elements common to all sun safety policies these are:

Protection: providing an environment that enables pupils and staff to stay safe in the sun.

Education: learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour.

Collaboration: working with parents, governors and the wider community to reinforce awareness about sun safety and promote a healthy school.

Cancer Research UK's Sun Smart provides guidance for Nursery, Primary and Secondary schools in developing a sun protection policy. (www.sunsmart.org.uk)

2. Shade

Avoidance is the most effective way of reducing exposure to the sun and preventing sunburn. It does present a number of challenges within the school environment. Providing adequate shade for everyone can be a long term goal but there are various measures schools can take in the short term.

Short term practical solutions - this could be to provide sunshades or umbrellas particularly where pupils congregate outdoors. These can be stored easily during winter months and used for special school events such as sports day. Consider the use of awnings and canopies to extend cover from existing buildings. Re- schedule outdoor activities during the summer term so that they take place before 11am or after 3pm. During the summer term introduce a system for warning staff and pupils on high burning days. Encourage the use of hats outdoors and make

them compulsory on sports days or other events when pupils will be outside for extended periods. Make sure that staff also wear hats outdoors to set an example.

3. Clothing

Encourage clothing that covers the body. The cover factor is the most important aspect. Shirts must have sleeves the longer the better and collars to protect the neck. Shorts should be longer to protect the top of the legs. Loose fitting clothes are cooler. Cancer Research UK's SunSmart campaign advises people to look for t – shirt material with a close weave and in darker colours as they will block out the most UV rays.

Hats- wide brimmed hats or legionnaire – style caps are the best. They provide adequate cover for the face, ears and back of the neck.

Water

Ensure that there is plenty drinking water. Children need extra fluids in hot weather to prevent dehydration.

Sunscreen

The use of sunscreen in schools is only one of a range of sun safety measures to prevent sunburn during the summer months but should be encouraged when other preventative measures such as shade or protective clothing are unavailable or impractical or as additional protection.

Sunscreen products are not classed as medicine. However the implications for sunscreen use in school are analogous to that of medicines. Teachers and other support staff are not legally obliged to administer sunscreen and the support and cooperation of parents is essential.

Schools have an important role in Safeguarding children. Protection from the sun is one of many safety issues that schools will wish to address with the involvement of parents.

Sunscreen should not be used to prolong the amount of time spent in the sun but as a form of protection when other measures are unavailable or impracticable.

At school this would include:

- Outdoor breaks, particularly lunch breaks
- PE or other outdoor lessons
- Sports days
- School excursions including outdoor swimming pools

How should sunscreen be applied?

Sunscreen applied before school provides insufficient protection for the whole day. Therefore schools need to consider the use of sunscreen by pupils most at risk of sunburn during school hours.

Some Children may be prone to skin allergies/skin sensitivities therefore children should be encouraged to bring their own sunscreen into school labelled accordingly for their self administration. Most children will be able to with some direction apply sunscreen themselves. Self application is recommended.

Young person/children and children with special needs may require assistance. Written permission for someone else to apply sunscreen must be gained from parents and carers.

Sample letters are provided for your assistance from www.sunsmart.org.uk. Teachers who do help to apply sunscreen should do so only to the face neck and arms and in accordance with relevant school policies.

Summary

There needs to be a common sense approach to sun safety within the schools. Schools should give consideration to the following:

- Sun protection policy including parental consent and information letters
- Shade
- Clothing
- Water
- Sunscreen

For further information:

Sunsmart- www.sunsmart.org.uk for school guidelines, sample policies and parent /carers letters.

Health Education Authority “Sun Safety Guidelines for Schools” available at Sun Safety Guidelines

Health Education Authority “Use of Sunscreen in Schools” available at: Use of Sunscreen in Schools

Review Date: September 2023