

Sun Safety Guidance Notes for Primary Schools in Stockport

Why is sun safety important?

As Stockport Council's Public Health Team, we are keen to work with schools to spread sun safety messages.

Did you know that?

- One blistering sunburn in childhood more than doubles a person's chance of developing melanoma later in life
- Skin cancer is the UK's most common and fastest rising cancer and is now one of the biggest cancer killers in 15-34 year olds.
- 80% of all skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to UVR from the sun and/or sunbeds making it skin cancer largely **PREVENTABLE**.

Your school can play a significant role via role modelling and education. This document provides guidelines and resources you may want to use with carers and children.

What can schools do?

You could

- Provide information for carers – for example the carers leaflet written by Public Health could be given out in book bags, or put on the school website.
- Encourage positive role modelling by staff – i.e. wearing suitable clothing, hats and sunscreen
- Encouraging children to wear a hat (legionnaire style or broad brimmed)
- Encouraging children to wear sunglasses
- Encouraging carers to use, and send into school, a high factor sunscreen on their child at least SPF 15 and UVA 4 stars
- Allowing children to access sun free areas between 11am and 3pm
- Ensuring children have access to extra fluids during the day
- There may be extreme cases where you have to consider making arrangements with carers for particularly vulnerable children.
- Write a school policy - some advice here from Cancer Research UK: <http://publications.cancerresearchuk.org/downloads/Product/ssps.pdf>

Sunscreen Guidelines

- Carers should apply sunscreen before children come to school, but it's good practice for schools to encourage children to reapply their own sunscreen throughout the day. The recommendation is that sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before sun exposure and then every 2 hours (or more if the cream is likely to come off due to washing, sweating or swimming)
- Sunscreen should not be rubbed in too hard – it should be patted or smoothed onto the skin. A generous amount should be applied to clean, dry exposed skin
- Attention should be paid to areas like the tops of the ears, back of the neck, shoulders and feet, as these areas are often forgotten

- Don't get sunscreen in eyes, nose or mouth
- When advising carers on sunscreen, you can tell them that the price is unimportant as long as it has at least 4 stars and is SPF 15+. It can expire and so new needs to be bought every year and stored in a cool, dry place.
- It is at the individual schools discretion if sunscreen is provided or if carers need to provide for children. It is advisable to have an opt-out policy in case the carer doesn't want their child to use sunscreen if provided.

The Current Heatwave Plan for England (2015) recommended that when the temperature is 30oC+, children should not take part in vigorous physical activity.

Looking longer term schools could consider:

- Ensuring polices aim to prevent children from getting sunburnt by encouraging them to seek shade where possible. When it's not possible they should be encouraged to wear hats, other clothing & sunscreen.
- Assessing the training needs of staff with responsibility for policy making in educational environments. Ensure they have the necessary skills and information to give their colleagues advice on sun protection issues. E.g. a teacher may need training in their risk factors, the types of behaviours to avoid and how to encourage children to apply their own sunscreen
- Planning a whole school community approach including governors, carers, TAs etc.
- Develop awareness raising activities through curriculum work and display – ideas are at the bottom of this document
- Develop shaded areas in the playground by planting trees for the future
- Re-scheduling times of outdoor events from afternoon to morning
- Reviewing summertime uniform requirements to include protective clothing (long sleeves, loose clothing, hat etc.)
- Signing up to the free Sunsafe Schools pledge and using their resources
<http://www.sunsafeschools.co.uk>

The Vitamin D debate

The sun makes us feel good and we all need the sun to survive. Sunlight helps your body produce Vitamin D which is important for developing and protecting strong and healthy teeth and bones.

We can also get Vitamin D from certain foods including milk, fish, egg yolks, and fortified cereals. However, exposure to UVB radiation is the most efficient way to boost Vitamin D supply. "15 to 20 minutes of unprotected sun exposure, without skin reddening or burning, per day should be sufficient for most people to produce the required vitamin D levels. Most healthy diets contain vitamin D, but where appropriate levels can be increased by supplements or a diet containing vitamin D rich foods, e.g. Fish & Milk"

Professor Andrew Wright, Consultant Dermatologist, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

To summarise the NICE/NHS sun safety guidelines:

- Sun screen should be at least factor 15
- And have UVA 4 stars at least
- If your shadow is shorter than you, you could burn
- Stay out of the sun between 11 and 3
- Protect skin with sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and t-shirt – sunburn should be avoided
- Reapply sunscreen often

Risk factors

The main risk factors for skin cancer are:

- Over exposure to sunlight
- Having a pale skin colour
- Having red hair
- Having lots of freckles or moles

Resources

I have looked through and can personally recommend these resources. Please let me know if I can help you and your school. Contact details at foot of page.

A really simple and effective video about skin cancer here

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer/how-the-sun-and-uv-cause-cancer>

<http://www.sunsafeschools.co.uk/downloads/> resources for schools including 'slip slop slap' song, UV forecast and lesson plans

Sun safe activity pack –free to download and no need to register

<http://www.skcin.org/downloads/SunSafeSummerActivityPack.pdf>

If you would like any support with your schools sun safety campaign, if you require any resources or training then please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. **Hayley Taylor-Cox – Public Health Cancer Prevention Lead. hayley.taylor-cox@stockport.gov.uk 0161 474 2452**

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Updated June 2017