

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that clients participating in Autism Queensland (AQ) services are appropriately protected from the harmful effects of the sun and that sun protection behaviours are integrated into daily practice.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees and clients of AQ in all AQ environments including on and off-site (e.g. Community Access or excursions). A reference to “employees” includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of AQ in any capacity.

## 3.0 POLICY

AQ recognises the importance of health and safety of the clients in our care and are committed to providing a safe and accountable procedure for sun protection.

This Policy demonstrates our commitment to sun safety throughout the year (even on cloudy days) and ensures sun protection behaviours are integrated into our daily planning and activities.

AQ will:

- ensure provision and maintenance of adequate, variable and quality shaded areas;
- where possible, plan outdoor daily activities outside of peak UV times;
- set up outdoor activities in shaded areas and encourage our clients, especially those without adequate sun protection, to use these areas;
- encourage the wearing of sun protective sunglasses and clothing, such as tops with sleeves and appropriate hats when outdoors;
  - where hats are forgotten, provide clean spare hats for clients to borrow – these will be temporarily labelled and washed following use to maintain hygiene and mitigate head lice risks
  - where a hat reduces visibility or interferes with activities and poses a risk to client safety; or when wearing a hat is not possible because other headwear is required for religious or safety reasons – allow hats to be removed but ensuring sunscreen and other sun safe measures are adhered to
- include learning activities that promote sun protection.
- include the Sun Safety Policy on the AQ website;
- promote the importance of parents/carers, support network and employees as role models for clients in relation to sun safety strategies;
- encourage the wearing of swim shirts during all water-based activities;
- make SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen, within expiry, available for use on uncovered areas of skin such as the face and back of the hands for all outdoor activities; and
- ensure access to drinking water at all times.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

**SunSmart** – a simple and effective way to reduce your risk of developing skin cancer (*Cancer Council Australia*)

**Sun Safety** – taking steps to protect people from the sun to reduce overexposure to ultraviolet radiation.

**Sun safe hats** – broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hats that provide maximum sun protection by shading the face, neck and ears.

**Ultraviolet radiation (UVR)** – the part of sunlight that causes skin damage and can lead to the develop of skin cancer. UVR is not related to light or temperature. It can be reflected by light and shiny surfaces such as sand, snow, concrete and water, and is present on cloudy days – heavy cloud does not decrease UVR but scattered cloud has little or no effect on UVR levels. (*Sun safety in state schools procedure (qed.qld.gov.au)*)

## 5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Clients will be encouraged to:**

- take responsibility for their own health and safety by being SunSmart;
- comply with this policy by wearing suitable hats, clothing and sunscreen;
- apply SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen at least 20 minutes before exposure to the sun and reapply at least every 2 hours (or after swimming or excessive sweating), to all uncovered parts of the skin such as the face and back of the hands for outdoor activities
- act as positive role models for other clients in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour;
- wear swim shirts during all water-based activities
- actively participate in activities that support understanding of sun safe behaviours.

Review the health care plans to make considerations where the client access' medications associated with an increased risk of heat-related illness.

Some clients may not want to use particular sun safety measures, it is therefore important to provide clients with choices and encourage all clients to implement sun safety measures. Some options for clients who do not want to implement sun safety measures include:

- a roll on or spray sunscreen;
- wearing loose-fitting clothing instead of wearing sunscreen;
- sitting in a sheltered area instead of wearing a hat or between putting on sunscreen.

### **Employees will be encouraged to:**

- be aware of the Sun Safety Policy (this document);
- when outdoors, take responsibility for their own health and safety by wearing sunscreen, a hat and clothing that covers shoulders at all times;
- encourage clients to wear suitable clothing and sunscreen;
- ensure sunscreen is:
  - within expiry date, else discarded at end of shelf life
  - stored securely, especially within classrooms;
- encourage clients to wear hats before and during breaks and to and from outdoor activities;
- act as positive role models for clients in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour;
- participate in initiatives to protect clients from excessive exposure to the sun;
- if a client accesses medications associated with an increased risk of heat-related illness, support the client or their families to develop an appropriate health care plan. Refer to *Complex Health Management Procedure – Safe Environment*. Typical medications include:
  - Anticonvulsants – including carbamazepine, phenobarbital, and topiramate
  - Antidepressants (both SSRIs and tricyclic antidepressants)
  - Antipsychotics – including aripiprazole, haloperidol, risperidone

- Diabetic medication – including metformin
- Diuretics and laxatives
- Statins – such as simvastatin
- Stimulants – such as methylphenidate.
- plan to maximise the use of shaded, veranda and indoor spaces to meet the client’s regulation and learning needs. Outdoor activities should be minimised between 10am-3pm where possible;
- use the sun protection measures listed for all outdoor activities when the UV index is 3 and above;
- plan ahead for outdoor activities during hot weather. This might include planning to:
  - go at a time of day that is cooler;
  - reschedule or reconsider plans that involve sun exposure;
  - go to location that include shaded areas and amenities;
  - have water and preferred drinks available;
  - keep food and drinks refrigerated or cold – consider taking an esky or cooler bag to keep them cold while out;
  - avoid wearing dark coloured clothing that absorb heat more than lighter coloured clothing; or
  - eat cold foods and foods with a high-water content such as salads, fruit and cold meats or fish.

**Parents/caregivers will be encouraged to:**

- be aware of the Sun Safety Policy (this document);
- support their dependent person in choosing SunSmart clothing to wear;
- ensure a hat is sent daily;
- act as positive role models in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour;
- provide sunscreen, labelled with their name, for their child if they don’t wish their child to use AQ’s sunscreen.
- have their dependent person apply sunscreen before they come to an AQ service and provide personal sunscreen for their dependent person to use.

## 6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

### Legislation

*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*

### NDIS Modules and Practice Standards

#### **Core 1: Rights and Responsibilities**

- 06 Person-Centred Supports
- 07 Individual Values and Beliefs

#### **Core 2: Governance and Operational Management**

- 12 Risk Management

### External

Sun safety in state schools procedure ([qed.qld.gov.au](http://qed.qld.gov.au))

Cancer Council Queensland

SunSmart app - SunSmart

NDIS Practice Alert - Practice Alert Sun and summer safety

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## Internal

Complex Health Management Procedure

Work Health & Safety Policy

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