

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

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BACKGROUND

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, we are committed to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children and staff by promoting safe and responsible practices around sun exposure. Too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage, and significantly increases the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Research shows that sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes greatly to an individual's lifetime risk.

We want all children and staff to enjoy the benefits of outdoor play and sunshine while staying protected. To achieve this, we work in close partnership with parents, carers, and the wider community to implement consistent and effective sun safety measures.

All children will take part in sun protection discussions at the beginning of the summer term, adapted to suit their age and understanding. All staff will be reminded on the importance of sun protection and the risks involved in not safeguarding themselves and others. Parents and carers are informed about our policy and supported in meeting their responsibilities regarding sun protection.

Sun safety is promoted throughout the setting by:

- Ensuring all children wear appropriate clothing, sun hats, and sunscreen
- Providing shaded areas and managing outdoor exposure according to UV and temperature levels
- Teaching sun safety to children as part of our curriculum
- Modelling safe behaviours, staff are expected to wear hats, seek shade, and stay hydrated

Our procedures follow current NHS sun safety guidance, which recommends that children use sun protection from a UV Index of 3 upwards, remain out of direct sunlight between 11:00am and 3:00pm, and wear sunscreen of at least SPF 30, however it is our policy for children to wear sunscreen of at least SPF 50. Babies under six months should not be exposed to direct sunlight at all.

Protecting our children from sun damage is a safeguarding priority, and failure to follow this policy will be treated as a serious matter.

These guidelines are as follows:

1. OUR GUIDELINES

1. CLOTHING AND HYDRATION

1.1 Clothing

- Children must arrive in sun-safe clothing:
 - A wide-brimmed or legionnaire hat
 - Lightweight, breathable clothing that covers shoulders
- Staff are expected to wear sun-safe clothing and hats when outdoors.

1.2 Hydration

- Water is available at all times.
- Water stations are placed in shaded outdoor areas.
- Children are regularly prompted and encouraged to drink water throughout the day, especially during outdoor play.

All nursery rooms are equipped with air conditioning, which is switched on during warm weather to maintain a comfortable and safe indoor environment. This ensures that children returning indoors from outdoor play are able to cool down effectively and rehydrate in a regulated, low-temperature setting.

The use of air conditioning also allows staff to manage nap times, indoor learning, and rest periods safely, even during heatwaves or periods of high humidity. Children who are overheated or tired from the heat benefit greatly from the temperature control provided in all our rooms.

During periods of high UV or excessive heat where outdoor play is reduced or suspended, the nursery continues to offer stimulating indoor experiences in a safe, climate-controlled space.

2. SUNSCREEN AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Parents are required to:
 - Apply SPF 50+ sunscreen before their child arrives
 - Provide clearly labelled, in-date sunscreen for their child's continued use
 - Sign a consent form authorising staff to reapply sunscreen as needed
- Sunscreen is reapplied:
 - At midday (for children attending full-day sessions)
 - After water play or excessive sweating
- If a parent has not provided sunscreen, staff may apply nursery stock (Gompels SPF 50) on a short-term basis, but this must not be routine. Parents who fail to provide sun cream regularly will be contacted in line with policy and safeguarding procedures.
- The ingredients and COSHH datasheet for the nursery's sunscreen are available upon request.

3. UV INDEX & OUTDOOR PLAY GUIDELINES

We use daily UV Index reports (via Met Office or NHS UV forecast) to guide our outdoor activity plans:

UV Index	Action
1–2	No special protection needed
3–5	Standard sun-safe measures in place (hats, sunscreen, shade)
6–7	Outdoor play restricted to shaded areas; reduce duration
8+	No outdoor play during 11:00am - 3:00pm; shaded play only early/late in day
10–11	Extreme UV: all children remain indoors during peak hours

This approach is aligned with NHS sun safety guidance, which states:

"Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm, use at least SPF 30 sunscreen, wear suitable clothing and sunglasses. Babies under 6 months should be kept out of direct sunlight entirely."

(Source: NHS, Sun Safety, 2024)

4. TEMPERATURE-BASED OUTDOOR PLAY LIMITS

Temperature	Action
Up to 24°C	Standard outdoor play with shade, sunscreen, and hydration
25°C to 28°C	Limit outdoor time; prioritise shaded areas and quiet play
29°C to 32°C	Outdoor play no longer than 30–60 mins depending on age; shade only
33°C+	Children remain indoors during peak heat hours

5. MAXIMUM OUTDOOR PLAY DURATIONS (WEATHER-ADJUSTED)

To ensure children remain safe in the sun, we limit consecutive outdoor periods based on age group and weather conditions. These times represent the maximum length of a single outdoor session before children are brought inside for a cooling and hydration break. This does not refer to the total amount of time spent outdoors across the whole day.

Children may have multiple outdoor sessions in one day, as long as each is followed by an adequate indoor break in a temperature-controlled environment. Staff should always consider the UV Index and outdoor temperature alongside these timeframes.

Age Group	Mild Weather (≤24°C)	Warm (25–28°C)	Hot (29–32°C)	Extreme (33°C+)
0–2 years	Up to 60 mins	45 mins	30 mins	Indoors only
2–3 years	Up to 90 mins	75 mins	45 mins	Indoors only
3–4 years	Up to 2 hours	90 mins	60 mins	Indoors only

- Indoor break periods must follow each outdoor session.
- Children must be observed for signs of heat exhaustion or discomfort during and after outdoor play.
- All indoor areas are air conditioned during warm weather, supporting effective cooling after time outside.

6. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

Staff must remain vigilant for early and advanced signs of heat-related illness. If a child displays any symptoms below, staff must act immediately and escalate to the management team.

Category	Signs and Symptoms	Action Required
Early Warning Signs	• Flushed cheeks • Heavy sweating or very dry skin • Unusual tiredness • Irritability or restlessness • Complaints of headache or nausea • Not drinking water	Move child to a shaded or cool space Encourage water slowly Monitor closely
Moderate Heat Exhaustion	• Dizziness or fainting • Pale, clammy skin • Vomiting or nausea • Rapid breathing • Temperature over 38°C • Muscle cramps	Remove from heat Use cool damp cloths Contact nursery manager and parent
Severe Heatstroke (Emergency)	• Confusion or disorientation • Seizures or convulsions • Collapse or unconsciousness • Temperature over 40°C • Hot, dry skin with no sweat	Call 999 immediately Begin emergency cooling measures Stay with the child and follow emergency protocols

7. SAFEGUARDING AND COMPLIANCE

Protecting children from sun exposure is a safeguarding issue. Staff must report any failure to follow this policy or any parent failing to provide suitable sunscreen or clothing.

This policy aligns with:

- NHS Guidance on sun protection
- Public Health England UV safety recommendations
- The setting's Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies

8. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if public health advice changes. Parents will be notified of any revisions.