

# The Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code

## Policy Document



## Rationale:

Children receive 80% of their lifetime sun exposure before they are 18, and we know there is a very clear link between sunburn in children and a higher risk of developing melanoma\* in later life.

“Research has looked into the link between sunburn and melanoma. Sunburn definitely increases the risk of melanoma. People with melanoma are twice as likely as other people to have been badly sunburned at least once in their lives. The risk is higher if you have had sunburn several times in your life. Sunburn in childhood is even more damaging than sunburn as an adult.”

**Cancer Research UK**

\*Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer.

## The Opportunity:

There is enormous potential to improve the provision of sun protection for children during the school years, and if that can be achieved, we can really make a difference for future generations.

Our aim is to support the many teachers, coaches, leaders and parents who work with the everyday challenge of getting children and young people outdoors and active!

The background to this is a climate of increased pressure from government for children to follow a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise, efforts to keep up the sporting momentum of ‘2012’, and the current debate on the benefits or otherwise of UV exposure through sunlight.

All of this makes the key objective of the initiative more relevant than ever; namely the protection of children from the harmful effects of the sun while enjoying physical activity outdoors.

# How will the Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code work?

The Myfanwy Townsend Melanoma Research Fund is the small, national charity behind this initiative. We are committed to creating a realistic and achievable campaign with the clear goal of protection. The charity has worked with the Association for Physical Education (afPE), sports coach UK and the Youth Sport Trust to create a **free** downloadable resource bank available to teachers, coaches, leaders and parents.

The aim of this initiative is to encourage active measures to be put in place to ensure effective sun protection for children while outdoors. The OK Toolkit is produced in consultation with NGBs, coaching and educational associations and the charity's medical advisor Mr Paul Banwell FRCS (Plast). It can be downloaded for ease of access, then, to gain your Accreditation Mark you need to complete 5 easy steps:

- 1 Registration**
- 2 Read the Policy Document and sign the Pledge** to implement the Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code
- 3 Download and distribute the OK Toolkit** to teachers, coaches, leaders and parents
- 4 Read and implement the OK Code** and complete the checklist to make sure that you comply with all the criteria of the **OK Code**
- 5 Submit** your evidence to gain your **Accreditation Mark**

**DISPLAY YOUR ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE!**

## The OK Toolkit

The downloadable OK Toolkit includes materials that can be used in a variety of ways. Groups and individuals can register to use the Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code Logo to show their commitment to the initiative. There is also a range of information which can be distributed to coaches, teachers, leaders and parents or used on site; including the following:

- Policy Document
- Pledge
- Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code
- Reminders and advice to be emailed to parents/carers
- A poster for changing rooms/clubhouses
- Checklist and advice for working outdoors with kids
- OK Logo
- Fact sheet leaflet
- Generic template
- Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code Accreditation Mark and Certificate



## Summary

Outdoor activities vary considerably and each can bring with it certain challenges. The Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code simplifies protective measures and focuses on easy steps to keep sun protection in mind. Flexibility is key and the needs of each activity are taken into account. Where the needs of the activity make it inappropriate or unsafe, it is not expected that all sun protection essentials are used. The Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code reminds all those who work with kids outdoors that children need to be protected, even on the less sunny days.

Other practical considerations include ensuring that break times are taken in the shade, sunscreen reapplied regularly, hats and sunglasses are worn where appropriate and there is plenty of water to drink. Reminder posters should be displayed in a prominent place, and additional sunscreen should be available to parents/carers, who have forgotten to apply it to their children.

# The Sun Safety Code (Short Version)

is produced by the **Myfanwy Townsend Melanoma Research Fund** in association with the Association for Physical Education (afPE), sports coach UK and the Youth Sport Trust.

Following the OK Code is as much about teachers, coaches, leaders and parents understanding sun protection as it is about communicating the key facts to children and their parents/carers. It is important for everyone to work together to ensure that all children are protected. Where children have special health requirements, these should be discussed with the parents/carers and a sun protection care plan agreed.

There are three core elements to the OK Code:

**1. EDUCATION 2. PROTECTION 3. LEADING BY EXAMPLE**



## EDUCATION:

How to deliver effective sun protection; the OK Toolkit will help with this:

- a) A letter/email to be circulated to parents/carers
- b) Advice for working outdoors with children to be made available to all staff
- c) The Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code to be read by all staff
- d) A poster to be displayed in a prominent position
- e) A fact sheet leaflet to be printed and distributed if further information is required

## PROTECTION:

The OK Code suggests levels of protection to be put in place where possible; and it is important to remember that clothing and shade should always be the first line of defence underpinned by the use of sunscreen. The following is recommended:

### Clothing

Teachers, coaches, leaders and parents should be familiar with the types of sun protective clothing that ideally should be worn. Recommendations should be made in line with suitability for each outdoor pursuit and the specific health and safety requirements needed to ensure safe enjoyment of each activity.

### Essential Kit

The OK Code suggests that children should be asked to attend with the following items and these should be worn when practical and within the requirements of each activity.

- Hat/cap (legionnaire style is best with protection for the back of the neck and ears)
- Tops with long sleeves
- Shorts/skirts to knee level or below, or to cover legs where the child is a wheelchair user
- Wraparound sunglasses

The Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code suggests that spare hats and tops are provided for any child who does not have appropriate items.

### Sunscreen and its application

- a) The correct application and use of SPF 30+ broad spectrum protection UVA/UVB to be recommended to all parents/carers and staff
- b) Extra SPF minimum SPF 30 UVA/UVB to be made available

### Additional forms of protection

Protection from the sun isn't just about sunscreen and sunburn, don't overlook heatstroke and heat exhaustion too. Consider the following:

1. **HYDRATION** – All children should attend with water bottles, be encouraged to drink and free supplies of water should be available at all times
2. **SHADE** – If at all possible, avoid the sun between 11am – 3pm. Try to make sure that lunchtime is taken in the shade and that there is plenty of shade either in a clubhouse or portable structure, for breaks, and when children are not physically active
3. **EXTREME HEAT** – 30°C and above is too hot for very physical activities without risking heatstroke and severe dehydration



## LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

To follow the Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code the following should be undertaken:

- a) Teachers, coaches, leaders and parents should lead by example, this means making sure that they are seen to be protecting themselves from sunburn and heatstroke/exhaustion; by dressing appropriately, remaining hydrated and avoiding extreme temperatures
- b) Where relevant, staff should apply sunscreen to themselves in full view of the children
- c) Staff should check that everyone is protected before a session starts, and sunscreen reapplied during the day
- d) Advice for working outdoors with children should be circulated to all staff. It can be downloaded from the OK Toolkit and contains background information, simple sun protection messages and some suggested dialogue to make sure that all children are informed and reminded of the importance of staying safe in the sun



Funded by the Myfanwy Townsend Melanoma Research Fund

*This document does not attempt to constitute an authoritative legal interpretation of the provisions of any enactment, regulations or common law. That interpretation is exclusively a matter for the courts. It offers guidance from which individual teachers, coaches or other responsible adults may apply according to the particular and specific circumstances with which they meet. Responsibility remains with the teacher, coach or other responsible adult for the appropriate management of any situation in which this guidance may be applied.*

*The Myfanwy Townsend Melanoma Research Fund, 6 Manor Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1LR. [www.melanoma-fund.co.uk](http://www.melanoma-fund.co.uk) Registered Charity 1085969*

In association with



Child Protection in Sport Unit