

Bloom Childcare

Sun Safety and Water Play Policy

Managing UV exposure and water play safely across all Bloom settings

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1. Policy Statement

Bloom Childcare believes that outdoor learning and physical play are fundamental to children's health, development and wellbeing. This policy sets out how Bloom protects children from the risk of sunburn, overheating and UV damage during outdoor play, and how water play is supervised and managed safely across all settings.

Bloom is committed to ensuring that neither the risk of sun exposure nor the risk associated with water play prevents children from accessing rich, enjoyable outdoor experiences. Our approach is one of managed risk - not avoidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Bloom Childcare settings, all staff, all children in Bloom's care, and all outdoor provision and water play activity. It covers outdoor play in the garden, paddling pool and water tray use, educational visits involving outdoor activity, and any other situation where children may be exposed to sun or water play in Bloom's care.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Legislation / Guidance	Reference	Relevance
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	Sections 2-3	General duty of care to protect employees, children and visitors from risks, including UV exposure and drowning hazards.
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Regulation 3	Requires a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for all activities, including outdoor play and water play.
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2026	Section 3	Requires providers to promote children's physical health and wellbeing, and to ensure adequate supervision during all activities.
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)	Regulation 7	Applies to sunscreen products - Bloom must have appropriate records of sunscreen used and any reactions. Sunscreen is a chemical substance and must be managed in line with the COSHH Inventory (B0010).

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) guidance on paddling pools	Current guidance	Non-statutory guidance on safe management of paddling pool water, depth, supervision and hygiene that Bloom follows as best practice.
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4. Definitions

Term	Definition
UV Index	A measure of ultraviolet radiation intensity from the sun. A UV Index of 3 or above is considered moderate and requires protective measures. Bloom monitors the UV Index daily during summer months using the Met Office app or equivalent.
Sunscreen/Suncream	A topical product applied to skin to reduce UV exposure. Bloom uses a minimum SPF 50+ broad-spectrum sunscreen on children during outdoor play when the UV Index is 3 or above, subject to parental consent.
Water Play	Any structured or unstructured play activity involving water, including water trays, paddling pools, water tables, hosepipes and similar.
Paddling Pool	A shallow temporary pool used for water play. At Bloom settings, paddling pools must not exceed 30cm (12 inches) in depth.
Supervision	Active, direct, uninterrupted visual oversight of children during water play. A designated supervisor is assigned solely to water play supervision and does not undertake other tasks during that time and never leaves position unless actively replaced by another supervisor.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Director (MD)

- Approves this policy and ensures it is reviewed annually and implemented consistently across all settings.
- Ensures adequate supplies of sunscreen and shade structures are resourced for each setting.

Area Manager/s

- Monitors compliance with this policy across their settings during routine visits, including checking that UV Index monitoring is taking place, sunscreen consent records are held, and water play risk assessments are current.
- Supports Setting Managers in procuring adequate supplies of sunscreen, shade structures and appropriate water play equipment.
- Reviews any sunscreen reaction, water play incident or near miss that is escalated by a Setting Manager, and determines whether further action or referral is required.
- Ensures that all settings within their area have completed and reviewed their outdoor play and water play risk assessments, and reports any compliance gaps to the MD.

Setting Manager

- Ensures a risk assessment is in place for outdoor play and water play at their setting, reviewed at least annually and before any significant change in provision.
- Monitors the UV Index daily during summer months (April to September) and initiates sun safety measures when the index reaches 3 or above.
- Ensures sun safety information is shared with parents and carers at the start of each summer season.
- Ensures parental consent for sunscreen application is obtained for every child and held on file.
- Ensures paddling pools and water play equipment are filled, used, supervised and emptied in line with this policy.
- Reviews any sunscreen reactions or water play incidents promptly.

All Staff

- Apply sunscreen to children as directed by this policy and only where parental consent has been given.
- Enforce the sun safety clothing requirements during outdoor play in high UV conditions.
- Take sole responsibility for supervising water play when designated to do so - no other task is undertaken during water play supervision.
- Empty and clean paddling pools immediately after use.
- Report any sunscreen reaction, water play incident or near miss to the Setting Manager immediately.

6. Sun Safety

6.1 Monitoring UV Levels

During the summer months (April to September), the Setting Manager or designee checks the UV Index for the local area each morning using the Met Office website or app. Sun safety measures are applied when the UV Index is 3 or above. Bloom does not wait for the weather to feel hot - UV radiation can be high on bright, overcast days.

6.2 Sunscreen

Bloom applies sunscreen to all children before outdoor play when the UV Index is 3 or above, subject to parental consent. The following requirements apply:

- Sunscreen must be a minimum SPF 50+ broad-spectrum product suitable for children's sensitive skin.
- Written parental consent for sunscreen application is obtained at registration and renewed annually. Children whose parents have not provided consent will not have sunscreen applied by Bloom staff - parents are asked to apply sunscreen before the child arrives on high UV days.
- Sunscreen is re-applied every two hours and after water play or excessive sweating.
- Individual sunscreen products brought in by parents for children with known skin sensitivities are stored and applied in line with the parent's instructions. These are managed under the COSHH Inventory (B0010).
- Any reaction to sunscreen is recorded as a first aid incident (B0007) and reported to the parent immediately. Medical advice is sought where the reaction is severe.

6.3 Protective Clothing and Shade

When the UV Index is 3 or above:

- Children must wear a sun hat with a brim that covers the back of the neck when outdoors.
- Where possible, children wear UV-protective clothing or have their shoulders and arms covered.
- Parents are notified at the start of the summer season that children must arrive with a sun hat during warm and sunny weather.
- Bloom provides additional hats for children who do not have one, or retains donated hats for this purpose.
- Outdoor play sessions are timed to avoid peak UV hours (11am to 3pm) where the setting's timetable allows. Where outdoor play occurs during peak hours, shade, sunscreen and hats are used.
- Adequate shade structures (sails, parasols, trees or building shade) are available in the outdoor area. Children are directed to play in shaded areas during peak UV periods wherever possible.

6.4 Hydration

Children are offered water to drink at regular intervals during outdoor play in warm weather, and fresh water is always available and accessible to children at all times. Children are encouraged to drink before going outdoors.

6.5 Recognising Heat-Related Illness

Staff are alert to the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke in children, including excessive sweating, pale and clammy skin, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, nausea and headache. Where a child shows these signs during outdoor play:

- Move the child to a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area immediately.
- Give them cool water to drink (if conscious).
- Call for the first aider.
- Call 999 if the child loses consciousness, has a high temperature with dry skin, or does not improve rapidly.
- Inform the parent or carer.
- Record the incident on B0007.

7. Water Play

7.1 General Principles

Water play provides rich sensory, scientific and creative learning experiences for young children. Bloom manages it safely through appropriate risk assessment, equipment, supervision and hygiene - not by avoiding it.

A risk assessment is completed and reviewed for all water play activities before the activity begins each season, or whenever the provision changes. The risk assessment considers the age and abilities of children involved, the depth and volume of water, and the number and positioning of supervisors.

7.2 Paddling Pools

Where a paddling pool is used at a Bloom setting:

- The pool must not exceed 30cm (12 inches) in water depth.
- A dedicated supervisor is assigned to the pool area throughout the session. The supervisor does not leave the pool area, does not carry out other tasks, and does not turn their back on children in the pool.
- The ratio of supervising staff to children at the poolside is a minimum of 1:2 for children under 3, and 1:4 for children aged 3 and over. These ratios are additional to the standard EYFS room ratios - the pool supervisor does not count towards the room ratio.
- Children must not enter the pool without being actively supervised.
- Children with known water sensitivity, phobia or medical contraindication are not placed in the pool without specific parental agreement.
- The pool is filled immediately before use - it is not left filled and unattended overnight or between sessions.
- The pool is emptied, cleaned and stored safely immediately after the session ends.
- No child is left unattended in or immediately next to the pool, even for a moment.

7.3 Water Trays and Water Tables

Water trays and water tables are managed as follows:

- Water is changed fresh for each session.
- The depth of water in a water tray does not exceed 10cm.
- A member of staff is positioned within arms reach of toddlers using a water tray.
- Water trays are emptied, cleaned with a suitable sanitising solution, and stored after use.
- COSHH-controlled sanitising products are stored and handled in line with B0010.

7.4 Legionella and Water Hygiene

Where water play involves stored or standing water (for example, a water butt or a pool left standing for any period), the risk of Legionella must be considered. Bloom's approach to water hygiene is set out in the Legionella Management Policy (B0042). In practice:

- Paddling pools are filled from fresh mains water immediately before use - not from stored water.
- Water is never left standing in a paddling pool or water tray.
- Water butts or stored water sources are not used to fill water play equipment.

7.5 Water Play Consent

Parental consent for water play is obtained at registration. Where a parent does not consent to their child participating in paddling pool use, this is respected and the child participates in alternative outdoor activity. Consent for water tray play is assumed unless a parent specifically withholds it.

7.6 Incidents Involving Water

Any incident during water play - including any near miss, slip, fall or submersion event however brief - is:

- Treated as a first aid incident and responded to immediately by the first aider.
- Reported to the Setting Manager without delay.
- Recorded on the Accident / Incident Report (B0007).
- Reported to the parent or carer at the earliest opportunity.
- Assessed to determine whether Ofsted or RIDDOR notification is required (B0074).

8. Communication with Parents

At the start of each summer season, Bloom issues a sun safety communication to all families, advising them of:

- The approach to sunscreen and the need for parental consent.
- The requirement for children to bring a sun hat during warm weather.
- The UV Index threshold at which sun safety measures will be applied.
- Water play activities planned for the season and the arrangements for consent and supervision.

Information about individual children with specific skin conditions, sunscreen allergies or water sensitivities is gathered at registration and updated whenever a parent informs the setting of a change.

9. Related Documents

- Health and Safety Policy (B0028)
- Legionella Management Policy (B0042)
- COSHH Inventory/Library (B0010)
- Accident / Incident Report Template (B0007)
- Notifiable Events Policy (B0074)
- Illness and Infection Control Policy (B0051)
- EV Trips Policy (B0025)

10. Recording and Reporting

Daily UV Index checks during summer months are recorded by the Setting Manager. Sunscreen consent records are held on each child's file. Any sunscreen reaction or water play incident is recorded on B0007. Patterns or significant incidents are reviewed at the Managers H+S Meeting (B0056).

11. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually (before the start of the summer season), or sooner following any sun safety or water play incident, or change in relevant HSE, Met Office or RoSPA guidance.

12. Policy Approval and Sign-Off

Managing Director / Duty Holder	Mark Johnson		1 st October 2026
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