



## SUN AND UV PROTECTION POLICY

### PURPOSE

To create environments and encourage behaviours to minimise the risk of skin cancer.

**Note:** Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Melanoma is the most common cancer in young Australians aged 13-24 years.

### POLICY

Our school:

- supports staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV index levels are 3 or above and allow sun exposure when UV levels are below 3
- develop and implement policy and procedures promoting sun-safe practices in consultation with students, staff and parents

Our schools accesses the daily sun protection times (issued whenever UV levels are forecast to be 3 or about) to assist with the implementation of this policy.

### UV radiation:

- cannot be seen or felt
- can be reflected off surfaces such as buildings, asphalt, concrete, water, sand and snow
- can pass through light clouds
- varies in intensity across the year (highest in Victoria from September - April)
- peaks during school hours.
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### SunSmart - sun protection times

The daily sun protection times let you know when you do and don't need sun protection each day. They are available via the free SunSmart app, on the [SunSmart](#) and [Bureau of Meteorology](#) websites and in the weather section of the newspaper.

### Healthy levels of exposure

**Overexposure** to UV radiation can cause:

- premature ageing
- sunburn
- skin damage
- eye damage
- skin cancer.

**Too little exposure** to UV radiation can lead to low vitamin D levels, affecting:

- regulation of calcium levels in the blood
- is vital for healthy bones, muscle, and general health.

When UV levels are **below 3** (generally from May to mid-August in Victoria)

- sun protection is not recommended unless near snow or other reflective surfaces
- spend time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered, to support vitamin D production
- be physically active outdoors to help boost vitamin D levels
- outdoor workers should use sun protection throughout the year, regardless of the UV level, as they have an increased risk of skin cancer.

When UV levels are **3 or above** (generally from mid-August to April in Victoria)

- sun protection, (including hats, sunscreen, clothing, shade and sunglasses) should be used when outdoors
- avoid deliberate and extended sun exposure
- if outdoors for extended periods
- when the UV levels reaches 3 and above.

**Note:** a few minutes of mid-morning or mid-afternoon sun exposure to arms and hands on most days of the week should be sufficient to maintain adequate vitamin D.

### Sun protection measures

While some sun exposure is necessary for the production of vitamin D, it is important to keep in mind that all sun exposure carries a risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer, especially for people with light skin colour. Extended and deliberate sun exposure without any form of sun protection when the UV Index is 3 or above is not recommended, even for those diagnosed with vitamin D deficiency.

For health and safety, schools should respond to each of the following seven UV protections measures during sun protection time (whenever UV levels are 3 or above).

#### 1. Shade

The school council ensures there are sufficient shelters and trees to adequately shade the school grounds, particularly in the following spaces:

- popular play areas
- assembly areas
- The school council and principal should ensure there is provision for shade in planning for future buildings or grounds. Schools should consider the availability of shade when planning excursions and other outdoor activities / events.

#### 2. Clothing

Our school uniform or dress code include sun-protective clothing such as:

- loose, cool, closely-woven fabrics
- shirts with a collar and or higher necklines
- tops with elbow length or long sleeves
- longer style shorts and skirts

**Note:** Singlet tops offer little protection and are not recommended.

#### 3. Hats

Students and staff:

- wear hat styles which protect the face, neck and ears, including:
- broad brimmed or legionnaire

**Note:** Caps and visors offer little protection and are not recommended.

#### **4. Sunglasses**

If practical, our school encourages students and staff to wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that:

- meet the Australian Standard
- cover as much of the eye area as possible.

#### **5. Sunscreen**

Our school encourages and reminds students and staff to:

- apply SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- apply a generous amount to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before going outdoors
- re-apply sunscreen every two hours (whether or not the label tells you to do this) or more often when sweating or swimming
- check and follow the use-by date stated on the packaging
- store sunscreen below 30°C
- do not rely on sunscreen alone as it does not provide full protection - combine with other sun protection measures
- develop strategies that remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (e.g. reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies, sunscreen stations near entry and exit points).

Students should:

- be able to apply their own sunscreen
- be reminded to reapply sunscreen
- have access to sunscreen for all outdoor activities e.g. include in first aid kit.
- Sunscreen (allergies and cross infection) - the risk of allergies and cross infection from sunscreen use is very small. For information about allergies, cross infection, nanoparticles, regulations and the latest research about sunscreen.

#### **6. Role-modelling**

As part of OH&S, risk control and role modelling, during sun protection times when the UV levels are 3 or above, staff are encouraged to:

- wear broad-brimmed hats, clothing and sunglasses for all outdoor activities and duties
- apply SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible.
- During sun protection times, families, visitors participating in, and attending outdoor school activities should also be encouraged to use a combination of sun-protection measures.

#### **7. Curriculum**

Our schools ensures that education about skin cancer prevention and healthy UV exposure levels are included in the curriculum for all year levels, where appropriate. SunSmart have a number of free resources for schools.

### **STRATEGIES**

- All students and staff are required, and visitors are encouraged, to wear a suitable hat and to apply sunscreen (factor 30 or greater) BEFORE they go outdoors.
- Sunscreen is applied in accordance with the manufacturer's directions (applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours, or more frequently if sweating or swimming).
- Suitable hats mean either legionnaire style, bucket or broad brimmed style that shade the face, ears and neck. Other clothing should provide adequate protection from the sun – including sleeves; "suitable hats" are available for sale from the school.
- Cool, loose-fitting, sun protective clothing made of densely woven fabric is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. It includes shirts with collars and elbow-length sleeves, longer dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

- Students will be directed to stay in designated areas if they do not have appropriate clothing and a suitable hat during recess and lunchtime.
- Children will be permitted to borrow a suitable hat, provided by the school, to ensure all students are able to participate in any outdoor education program and excursions.
- Sunscreen (factor 30 or greater) will be provided in each area, although it would be helpful if students have their own.
- Articles will be provided by the Leadership for the weekly Bulletin about the risks of exposure to the sun, and sun protection ideas.
- Parents/Carers and staff will be encouraged to act as role models in being sun smart.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to use shade areas in the playground.
- The School will work to ensure that there is adequate shade in the playground and to provide additional shade, if applicable.
- Implementation
- Parents/Carers and students will be routinely informed of the School's Sun and UV Protection strategies via the weekly Bulletin.
- Teachers will encourage and remind children to wear sunscreen and suitable hats before going outside.
- Students who do not wear suitable hats, covering clothing and sunscreen will be directed to play in shade areas during outside activities.
- The School will be aware of the Sun and UV Protection Policy and ensures that there are adequate shade areas in the playground.
- Skin cancer awareness issues are included in the Health and Physical Education learning area.
- Teachers will plan and organise discussions and activities to reinforce the Sun and UV Protection Policy.
- Sunscreen will be available in all areas.

## **RESOURCES**

School Policy Advisory Guide (SPAG) DET  
Cancer Council Victoria

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's policy review process or if required by DET and/or Cancer Council updates.

This policy was last ratified by AVSS School Council on: 6/08/2019

This policy will be reviewed in line with Cancer Council guidelines.