

UV policy

This policy is suitable for all E-12, P-12 and 7-12 schools. Schools are welcome to copy this policy directly and use it as their own or incorporate the main points into their own policy.



< School >'s UV policy

Rationale

A healthy balance of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health.

Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before they are 70. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer.

Sun protection is needed whenever UV levels reach three and above. In Victoria average UV levels are three and above from September to the end of April. During these months extra care is needed between 10am – 3pm when UV levels reach their peak.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D regulates calcium levels in the blood. It is also necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, muscles and teeth and for general health. From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three so sun protection isn't usually needed during these months unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

Objectives

The objectives of this UV policy are to:

- Ensure that all students and staff maintain a healthy UV exposure balance.
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
- Encourage safe UV exposure whenever UV Index levels are below 3.
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's UV radiation policy.

~ Where applicable, staff are encouraged to access the daily SunSmart UV Alert to assist with the implementation of this policy.

From September to April in Victoria

When average UV Index levels reach 3 and above.

Shade

- The school council/board ensures shade is available in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate – for example, lunch areas, canteen, outdoor lesson areas.
- The school council/board ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Processes for the planning of outdoor activities and excursions include the consideration of shade.
- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- Students are encouraged to use shade when outside particularly if they are not wearing appropriate hats or clothing.

Clothing, hats and sunglasses

- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform or dress code and sports uniform in the following ways.

[As a minimum standard, **at least three** of the following items must be included in your policy. It is anticipated that schools will work towards achieving all of these standards over time.]

- The summer uniform/dress code includes a shirt with at least elbow length sleeves and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
- The summer uniform/dress code includes longer style skirts/shorts/pants at least to the knee.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes a shirt that covers the shoulders well and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
- Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears (i.e. broad brimmed or bucket hats), whenever they are outside. During sports classes, baseball caps are worn where a broad brimmed or bucket hat may be impractical.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes longer style skirts/shorts/pants at least to the mid-thigh.
- Rash vests or T-shirts are compulsory for outdoor swimming, when students are waiting to compete.
- Students and staff are encouraged to wear close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

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Sunscreen

- SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students' use and students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school.
- Staff encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outside.
- With appropriate consultation, students with naturally very dark skin (skin that rarely or never burns) are not required to wear sunscreen.
- The school community is educated about the correct use of sunscreen and the level of protection it provides.

Scheduling

- This policy is considered in the planning of all outdoor events such as assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events.
- Where possible, outdoor activities/events will be scheduled to minimise time in direct sun e.g. earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Shaded and indoor venues will be considered.

Staff OHS and Role modelling

- As part of OHS UV risk controls and role modelling, staff are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when outside.
- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

From May to August in Victoria

When average UV Index levels are below 3.

- To help maintain winter vitamin D levels, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above.
- Sun protection measures are only required when in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

Curriculum

- Educational programs on skin cancer prevention and healthy UV exposure for vitamin D are incorporated into appropriate areas of the school curriculum.
- Students are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model appropriate UV

exposure measures to the whole school community.

- Appropriate UV exposure measures are regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, staff meetings and school assemblies.

Professional development for staff

- Appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff training to enable staff to work safely outdoors and to encourage them to be positive role models.
- Information on appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff booklets.
- New staff are given a copy of this policy.

Review of policy

- The school council, staff and SRC regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the UV policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required.

Next policy review: (Insert date)

Name of person/position with responsibility for reviewing policy: (Insert name)

Relevant Documents / Links

1. Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide: 4.5.11 Skin protection
2. Building Quality Standards Handbook: Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
3. Education and Training Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools -Government Response www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc/fs_previous.html
4. Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
5. Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006) ARPANSA Radiation Protection Series No. 12 http://www.arpansa.gov.au/publications/codes/rps_12.cfm
6. Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight
7. SunSmart sunsmart.com.au
8. SunSmart UV Alert (issued whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above) sunsmart.com.au or www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv/