



# Top tips for sun-protective school uniforms

Clothing helps to act as a barrier between the skin and the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. But not all clothing styles and fabrics are up to the task.

It's important to choose clothing that covers as much skin as possible but still allows ventilation to keep the body cool.

A uniform policy or dress code should consider clothing for various events on and off-site, such as sports carnivals, swimming events, excursions and free dress days.

**For the best level of protection, use all five sun protection measures: clothing, sunscreen, a hat, shade and sunglasses.**

## UPF: Ultraviolet protection factor

Some clothing carries a tag with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating for sun protection. There are only four UPF ratings for clothing – UPF15, 30, 50 or 50+. The UPF rating refers to both the design of the garment (how much skin it covers) and fabric (how much UV it blocks). Specific UPF guidelines have been developed by Standards Australia under the Sun protective clothing standard (AS 4399:2020).

To claim a UPF rating, as a minimum, clothing should cover the upper body including the torso and ¾ of the upper arms and/or the lower body. Lower body coverage should extend from the hip line to halfway down the thigh. The Australian Standard states that clothing designs incorporating full length sleeves, collars, crew necklines, long skirt or long trouser legs cover more body surface area thereby providing a more extensive physical barrier to UV (4.2.1).

Caps and sun-visors cannot claim or display a UPF rating as they do not provide adequate coverage.

UPF classifications (AS 4399:2020)		
UPF Rating	UPF Classification	% UV blocked
15	Minimum protection	93.3%
30	Good protection	96.7%
50, 50+	Excellent protection	98%

## Uniform committee checklist

*Does your uniform policy or dress code consider UV safety and sun protection?*

*Does your uniform supplier provide current UPF ratings (Australian Standard 4399:2020) for all garments?*

- UPF50 / UPF50+ rating to ensure the fabric and design meets the Australian Standard

*Can't see a UPF rating? Look for:*

### Design

- Garment covers full torso including upper neckline
- At least elbow-length or long sleeves
- At least knee-length or longer shorts/skirt/dress
- Long trousers

### Fabric

- Is it densely woven?

### Hats

- Broad-brim hats should have a wide, straight brim
- Bucket hats should have a deep crown that sits low on the head and an angled brim
- Legionnaire hats should have a flap that covers the ears and back of the neck to the collarbone/shoulder. The side flap and front peak should overlap to protect the side of the face





Please note: Baseball or peak caps do not provide enough protection and are not recommended.

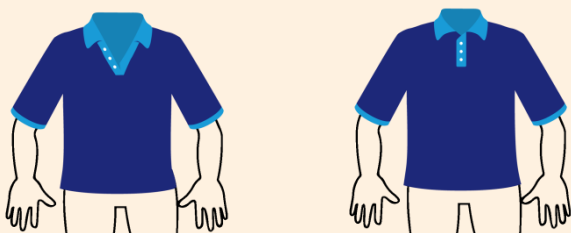
### Recommended hat brim width measurements

Indicative age group	Head-wear size	Broad-brim minimum brim width	Bucket minimum brim width	Legionnaire minimum brim width
<b>Children</b>				
Infants 0–1 year	41–43cm	5cm	5cm	Proportional to the child's head/face
Toddler 1–2 years	49–52cm	5cm	5cm	Proportional to the child's head/face
3–8 years	50–54cm	5cm	5cm	6cm
8–12 years	55–56cm	6cm	6cm	6cm
<b>Adults</b>				
S/M	56–57cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
M/L	57–59cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
L/XL	59–61cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
XXL	62–63cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm

## What to look for when choosing sun-protective clothing

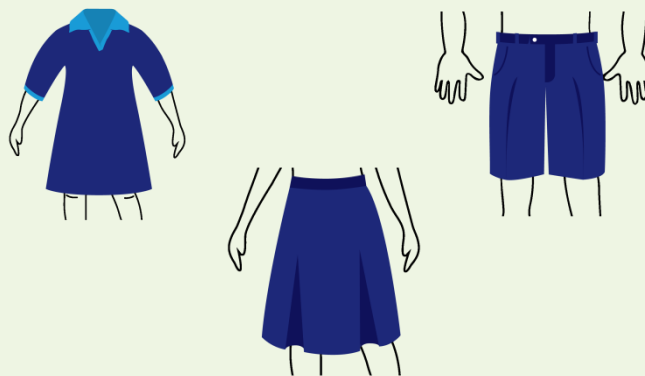
### Design

Look for clothing with higher necklines that cover the upper chest and collarbones e.g. crew necks or collared shirts with a buttoned-up, closed neck line. Some polo shirts have good collars but leave the delicate areas on the upper chest and neck exposed to UV when buttons are undone.



Look for longer style sleeves – at least to the elbow or long if possible.

Longer style shorts/trousers/dresses/skirts are also best. They should at least cover most of the thigh but preferably reach the knee.



### Fabric used

What is the fabric structure? If you hold it up to the light, will it let a lot of light through? This can mean it will allow a lot of UV to pass through too. Fabric with a tighter weave is often better at protecting from UV, and darker colours generally offer more protection than lighter colours.

### Fit

Clothing should be correctly sized, as tight-fitting fabric may stretch and offer less protection as a result.

### Condition

With wear and tear over time, even the most sun-protective garment will become less protective. Aim to keep clothing in good condition, where it is not too stretched or worn.

Last updated: October 2020