



Top tips for sun-protective school uniforms in secondary schools

Clothing is one of the simplest ways to protect skin, helping to create a barrier between the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation and the skin.

But not all clothing styles and fabrics are up to the task.

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

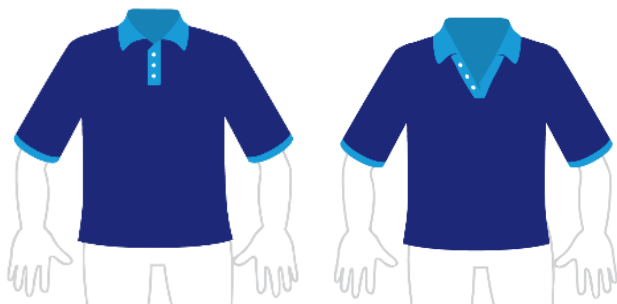
A uniform policy or dress code should consider clothing for various events on and off-site, including sports and swimming events, excursions and free dress days.

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, close neckline. Some polo shirts have good collars but leave the delicate areas on the upper chest and neck exposed to UV when buttons are undone.



- ✓ Longer style sleeves – at least to the elbow.
- ✓ Longer style dresses, skirts, shorts and pants. They should cover most of the thigh and 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 and/or tension

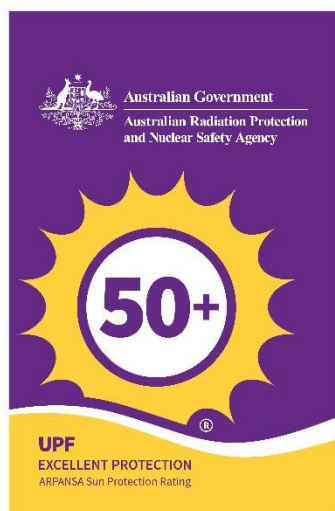
Clothing should be correctly sized, as tight-fitting fabric may stretch and offer less protection as a result.

Condition

With wear and tear over time, even the most sun-protective garments will become less protective. Aim to keep clothing in good condition.

UPF rating for clothing

Some clothing carries a tag with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating for sun protection. The UPF rating of clothing indicates how much UV radiation can get through fabric and reach skin. It refers to both the design of the garment (how much skin it covers) and its fabric (how much UV it blocks).



To claim a UPF rating, clothing must meet the Australian Standard for Sun Protective Clothing (AS4399:2020) requirements. This includes covering the upper body including the torso and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the upper arms and/or the lower body. Lower body coverage should extend from the hip line to halfway down the thigh.

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 checklist

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

Does your uniform supplier provide current UPF ratings (AS 4399:2020) for all garments, including sports uniforms?

If you can't see a UPF rating? Look for:

Design

- ✓ Garments that cover the full torso including upper neckline
- ✓ At least elbow-length or long sleeves
- ✓ At least knee-length or longer style shorts/skirt/dress
- ✓ Long trousers

Fabric

- ✓ Densely woven, lightweight, natural fibres,
- ✓ Darker colours

Hats

- ✓ Broad-brimmed hats should have a wide, straight brim of 7.5cm or more
- ✓ Bucket hats should have a deep crown that sits low on the head and an angled brim of 6cm or more
- ✓ 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. The brim should be 7.5cm or more.

Please note: Baseball or peak caps do not provide enough protection and are not considered suitable for sun protection.

More information and resources

For more information, visit [sunsmart.com.au](https://www.sunsmart.com.au).

For secondary schools visit:

<https://www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/secondary-schools>

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