

UV (Sun Smart) 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. 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.

1. Guidelines

- 1.1 Ensure that all students and staff maintain a healthy UV exposure balance
- 1.2 Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of safe sun protection measures
- 1.3 Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the school community at appropriate times
- 1.4 Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.

2. Implementation

- 2.1 This policy is to be read as part of our Uniform Policy
- 2.2 **From September to April in Victoria** (When average UV Index levels reach 3 and above)

Shade

- 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 not wearing appropriate hats or clothing are to remain in shade during sport or play times – No hat, no play (Refer to Uniform Policy).

Clothing, hats and sunglasses

- The summer uniform includes a t-shirt with at least elbow length sleeves and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone and a longer style shorts/pants at least to the knee
- Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears (i.e. wide brimmed or legionnaires hats), whenever they are outside
- 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.

Sunscreen

- Students are to bring their own sunscreen to school - SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- Staff are to encourage students to apply sunscreen before going outside
- 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 e.g. 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 (clothing, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when outside
- Families/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.

2.3 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

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 and school assemblies.

2.4 The School Council will consider shade provision in plans for future buildings and grounds and endeavor to provide and maintain adequate shade structures (shelters and trees) to provide adequate shade in the playgrounds

2.5 The School will maintain accreditation as a 'SunSmart' School (Cancer Council of Victoria).

3. Evaluation

The Education Sub-committee and Weeden Heights PS staff will review the effectiveness of the school's UV (SunSmart) Policy on a cyclical basis in accordance with DET guidelines.

They will:

- 3.1 Review the 'SunSmart' behaviour of students, staff and parents and make recommendations to School Council for improvement
- 3.2 Assess shade provision and usage of shaded areas, making recommendations to School Council for increases in shade provision where necessary.

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/rps12.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/

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