

SunSmart (Sun & UV Protection) Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create school environments and encourage behaviours at Hillsmeade Primary School that minimise the risk of skin cancer.

Scope

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It is applicable to all students and staff.

Guidance

Schools should:

- support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV index levels are 3 or above (generally from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria)
- develop and implement local policy and procedures promoting sun-safe practices in consultation with students, staff and parents.
- review, and if necessary, update the policy at least once every 3 to 4 years

Ultraviolet radiation

Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (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 to 24 years. Overexposure to UV radiation can cause:

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

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 mid-August to the end of April)
- is at its peak during school hours

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School obligations

School staff have a duty of care and obligations under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#) to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks to student health and safety arising from exposure to UV.

Policy

The school will meet its duty of care obligations by:

- adopting a local SunSmart policy.
- providing adequate shade
- adopting uniform or dress codes which include sun-protective clothing using hats, sunglasses and sunscreen
- staff role-modelling personal sun-protection measures
- engaging directly with students to support sun protection strategies

When UV levels are 3 or above (generally from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria) all staff and students will:

- use a combination of sun-protection measures (including hats, sunscreen, clothing, shade and sunglasses) when outdoors
- avoid deliberate and extended sun exposure
- OHS risk controls should consider the school environment including:
 - developing shade
 - modifying highly reflective surfaces
 - higher risk times in Victoria between mid-August to the end of April (inclusive)
 - outdoor programming schedules
 - dress codes

Communication

The school will develop a communication strategy as part of their SunSmart policy for the whole school community that includes:

- newsletters
- the school's homepage/intranet
- school diary
- staff and parent meetings
- school assemblies
- excursions, camps, sports carnivals and events
- student enrolment / new staff orientation

Sun protection times — SunSmart app

The daily sun protection times lets us know when we do and don't need sun protection each day. These are available:

- via the free SunSmart app and widget
- on the SunSmart and Bureau of Meteorology websites

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- in the weather section of the newspaper

We will:

- access the daily protection times via the SunSmart app
- add the SunSmart website as a favourite or uploading the free SunSmart widget to the school homepage
- enlist students to help monitor the daily sun protection times and report them to the school community via the daily bulletin, assembly or PA announcements

Sun protection measures

For health and safety, we will respond to each of the following UV protections measures when UV levels are 3 or above. We also will consider becoming a SunSmart school.

Shade

The School Council and Principal will ensure there is provision for shade in planning for future buildings or grounds. We will consider the availability of shade and other appropriate sun protection measures when planning excursions and other outdoor activities or events.

It is important to ensure that there are sufficient shelters and trees to adequately shade the school grounds, particularly in the following spaces:

- the canteen
- outdoor lesson areas
- popular play areas
- assembly areas
- sporting grounds/pools

Clothing

The student dress code will include sun-protective clothing such as:

- fabrics with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating for sun protection or tightly-woven fabrics
- tops/shirts with collars or high necklines, and sleeves of at least three-quarter-length
- pants or skirts of at least three-quarter length
- rash vests or long sleeve t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities

Singlet tops offer little protection and are not recommended

Refer to SunSmart's [Slip on clothing](#) for further information.

Hats

Students and staff are encouraged to wear hat styles which protect the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears.

These include:

- broad-brimmed hat
- legionnaire hat
- bucket hat

Baseball or peaked caps and sun visors are not recommended, as these styles do not protect the ears, cheeks or neck.

Refer to SunSmart's [Slap on a hat](#) for further information.

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Sunglasses

We encourage students and staff to wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible. Sunglasses should ideally meet the following requirements:

- Australian or New Zealand standard AS or NZS 1067.1:2016 (with lens category 2, 3 or 4, not fashion spectacles)
- sunglass lenses with an Eye Protection Factor (EPF) rating of either 9 or 10 or be labelled UV 400

Refer to SunSmart's [Slide on sunglasses](#) for further information.

Sunscreen

We encourage and remind students and staff to:

- apply SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before going outdoors
- re-apply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors and after swimming or sweating
- use sunscreen within its expiry date
- store sunscreen below 30°C
- add sunscreen to the school booklist, as an optional extra, so a student then has their own sunscreen which is suitable for their skin
- 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 not rely on sunscreen as a sole line of defence against UV. It should be used along with other sun protection measures. Students should:

- be able to apply their own sunscreen
- be reminded to re-apply sunscreen
- have access to sunscreen for all outdoor activities e.g. include in a first aid kit

Sunscreen reaction or allergy

The risk of allergies and cross infection from sunscreen use is very low. Where a student has experienced a reaction to sunscreen, parents/carers are encouraged to consult their doctor and seek a referral to a dermatologist to understand what may have caused a reaction and gain advice on ingredients that should be avoided in the future. Other sun protection measures should be followed when sunscreen can't be used.

Refer to [sunscreen reactions](#) for further information.

Vitamin D

The sun's UV is both the major cause of skin cancer and the best source of vitamin D. Adequate vitamin D levels are reached through regular incidental exposure to the sun for most people.

When the UV index is 3 or above (generally from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria) most students and staff can maintain adequate vitamin D levels just by spending a few minutes outdoors on most days of the week.

When the UV index falls below 3, students and staff should spend some time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered. In late autumn and winter when the UV index falls below 3, sun protection is not required unless the school is near highly reflective surfaces like snow, or are outside for extended periods. Sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

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Role-modelling

As part of OHS risk control and role-modelling for students, during sun protection times when the UV levels are 3 or above, staff will be encouraged to:

- wear broad-brimmed hats, clothing and sunglasses for all outdoor activities and duties
- apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible

During sun protection times, families and visitors participating in and attending outdoor school activities also are encouraged to use a combination of sun-protection measures.

Curriculum

The school will ensure that education about skin cancer prevention is included in the curriculum for all year levels, where appropriate. SunSmart have a number of free resources for schools, visit [SunSmart primary school resources](#)

The school will remind families through newsletters, noticeboards, the school website and school assemblies of the SunSmart policy.

Further Information & Resources

- School Policy Advisory Library:
 - [Sun and UV Protection Policy](#)
 - [Duty of care](#)
- [SunSmart](#)
- [Achievement Program](#)'s SunSmart Policy [schools will need to register for the program to gain access to these resources]

Reference:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/sun-protection>

- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Student Dress Code Policy*.

Review Cycle

This policy, first developed in this format in May 2019 and updated in September 2020, will be reviewed as part of the school's three-yearly review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-June 2020).

School Council Approval Required

This update was ratified April 2021