

St Mary's SunSmart Policy

St Mary's SunSmart / Sun Protection Policy

Rationale

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. More than two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. As the sun's UV radiation is the major cause of skin cancer, most skin cancers can be prevented by using sun protection measures whenever UV levels are three or higher.

Purpose

Given school hours and activities fall within peak UV periods of the day, this comprehensive evidence-informed policy provides guidelines on effective UV protection strategies.

This SunSmart policy provides guidelines to;

- ensure all students and staff are protected from over-exposure to UV radiation,
- ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for students and staff,
- ensure students are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills to help them be responsible for their own sun protection,
- support our school's strategies to meet its duty of care and occupational health and safety obligations to minimise harmful UV exposure for students, staff and visitors.

Scope

This policy applies to all;

- students, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors,
- activities and events on and off-site including; recess/lunch, outdoor lessons, assemblies, PE and sports classes, interschool sports activities, excursions, camps and free dress days,
- school environments and environments where school-related events occur.

Definitions

- **Ultraviolet (UV) radiation** - a type of energy produced by the sun and some artificial sources, such as solariums and collariums. UV can't be seen or felt. The sun's UV can reach you directly and also indirectly (reflected off different surfaces and scattered by particles in the air). At least 95% of skin cancers are caused by UV exposure.
- **Sun protection times** - a forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology for the time-of-day UV levels are predicted to reach 3 or higher (when sun protection is recommended for all skin types). In Victoria, UV levels typically reach 3 or higher daily from mid-August to the end of April. Sun protection times are available for various locations across Victoria, nationally and globally on the free SunSmart Global UV app.
- **Sun protection** - a combination of strategies (clothing, hats, sunscreen, sunglasses and shade) to protect from UV.
- **Shade** - a barrier (built, natural or temporary) that protects from direct UV. Good quality shade can reduce UV by up to 75%. Shade design should also incorporate indirect UV protection through the choice or modification of surrounding surfaces (e.g., dark, natural rough surfaces that reflect less UV).



Implementation

Staff and students are encouraged to access, display and communicate the daily local sun protection times via the [SunSmart widget](#) on the school's website/intranet, [free SunSmart Global UV app](#), [sunsmart.com.au](#) or [bom.gov.au](#).

The sun protection measures listed in this policy are used for all outdoor activities **during the daily local sun protection times**. Implementation only in Terms 1 and 4 is insufficient to protect against UV exposure risks.

Procedures

1. Environment

Shade: *Seek shade*

- The school council/board ensures there is enough shade (natural, built, temporary) available in the school grounds, particularly in high-use areas– for example where students have lunch, canteen, popular play spaces/equipment, assemblies, sports and outdoor lessons.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions.
- Students are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- The school council/board ensures shade provision and UV reflective surfaces are considered in plans for refurbishments and future buildings and grounds.
- A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

2. Behaviours

School uniform/dress code

Clothing: *Slip on sun protective clothing*

- Both the school uniform/dress code and sports uniform/dress code include;
 - Cool, loose-fitting, sun protective clothing made of densely woven or UPF rated fabric,
 - Shirts with collars and elbow-length sleeves,
 - Longer-style dresses, skirts, shorts and pants,
 - Rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming and water sport activities.
- Students without appropriate covering clothing will be asked to use shaded areas or suitable areas protected from the sun.

Hats: *Slap on a sun protective hat*

- All staff and students wear broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats that protect their face, head, neck and ears, whenever they are outside.
- Caps and visors are not considered a suitable alternative.
- Students without a sun protective hat are provided with a spare hat where possible.
- Students without an appropriate hat will be asked to use shaded areas or suitable areas protected from the sun.

Sunscreen: *Slop on sunscreen*

- The school supplies SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students to use
- Students provide their own SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. This is included on the school's booklist each year.
- Strategies are in place to remind and encourage students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (e.g., reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies) with time for this scheduled into the daily routine.
- The school community is educated about the correct use of sunscreen and the level of protection it provides (apply 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours, or more frequently if sweating or swimming e.g. towel dry and then re-apply).
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Sunglasses: *Slide on sunglasses [if practical]*

- Where practical, students 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.



Governance and leadership

Staff role-modelling and OHS

- As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff;
 - wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses,
 - apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, and
 - seek shade whenever possible.
- SunSmart information is included in staff handbook/orientation materials and during new staff induction.
- Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote sun protection education across the curriculum.
- UV radiation exposure is considered as part of the [school's risk management and assessment](#) for all outdoor events and activities on and off-site, e.g. UV radiation protection strategies (hats, clothing, shade, sunscreen) are included in school camp activities, excursions, sports days and interschool sports events.

School and community engagement

Families and visitors

- For their own safety and to reinforce our school's sun protection strategies, families, visitors, contractors and volunteers are also asked to;
 - wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses,
 - apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, and
 - seek shade whenever possible.

School curriculum

Learning

- Sun protection and UV safety education is incorporated into the curriculum for all year levels including: Foundation to Year Six, within the Health and Physical Education curriculum.
- Students are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the school including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection for the whole school community e.g. accessing daily sun protection times, hat and sunscreen application reminders, and supporting other students to be SunSmart.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, school website/intranet/noticeboard, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and at student enrolment / orientation.

Monitoring and review

- The school council, staff and students/SRC monitor and review the effectiveness of our SunSmart policy (at least every five years) and revise the policy when required.
- SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families, students and visitors.
- The school's SunSmart policy is easily accessible to staff, students and parents via our school website and the Parent Access Portal (PAM).
- Our school is committed to our SunSmart membership and completes a policy review and membership renewal with SunSmart at <https://www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/schools-early-childhood/renew-your-sunsmart-membership> at least once every five years.
- As registered SunSmart members, we have submitted a copy of our policy to SunSmart and commit to implementing the sun protection measures as documented. SunSmart will be notified of any changes to our policy.

Policy last reviewed:	May, 2025
Approved by:	St Mary's Staff
Next scheduled review date:	May, 2030



Related policies and documents

Legislation and standards

- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#): Sch.5 Reg. 1 (1.2)

Department of Education and Training (Vic): Policy & Advisory Library (PAL)

- [Sun and UV Protection](#) / SunSmart policy template (DET portal) (Feb 2023)
- [Shade Sails](#)
- [Outdoor activities and working outdoors](#)
- [Outdoor Education Schools](#)
 - [Risk management – schools](#)
 - [Student Dress Code](#)
- Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) [Building Quality Standards Handbook](#) (BQSH): Section 5.1 Landscape architecture, 5.1.5 Shade Areas (May 2023)

SunSmart

- [Sun protection resources and information for primary schools](#)
- [Sun protection resources and information for secondary schools](#)
- [Sun protection advice for parents and carers](#)
- [Sun protection information in different languages](#)
- [Sun protection information for workplaces](#)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) [Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration](#) - Care, safety and welfare of students p.23 (January 2022)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), [The Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct](#) - Principle 3.2 (May 2021)
- [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (AITSL) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
 - [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](#) (VEYLDF) (May 2016)
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) [Your Child's Health Wellbeing and Safety \(Parent Handbook\)](#)
- Independent Schools Victoria – [isComply](#) (ISV portal)
- Education and Training Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into [Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools – Final Report](#) (2007)
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority [Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation](#) (2006)
 - WorkSafe Victoria: [Sun protection](#)
 - Safe Work Australia: [Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#) (Mar 2020)
 - AS 4174:2018 Knitted and woven shade fabrics
 - AS/NZS 1067.1:2016 (Amd 2021), Eye and face protection - Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
 - AS 4399:2020, Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification
 - AS/NZS 2604:2012 Sunscreen products - Evaluation and classification
 - AS/NZS 4685.0:2017, Playground equipment and surfacing - Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.6.2.1: General considerations, 6.3.9: Shade and sun protection, Appendix A: Shade and sun protection
 - [Healthy Schools Achievement Program](#) – Sun protection
 - United Nations. 1989. ["Convention on the Rights of the Child."](#) Treaty Series 1577 (November): 3
- World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Health Promoting Schools – [global standards and indicators](#)

Please note: Certain health conditions and medications mean some people are more sensitive to UV radiation and need to use sun protection at all times regardless of the UV levels. Please make sure your policy includes the particular needs of these children and staff at your school. For further information visit [Risk factors for skin cancer](#).

Last updated: March 2024
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Use all five
forms of sun
protection

