RATIONALE:

A healthy balance of the sun’s ultraviolet radiation (UV) 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. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before they are 70. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is 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 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. 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 unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

OBJECTIVES

The goals of the SunSmart Policy are to:-

- Ensure that all students and staff maintain a healthy UV exposure balance.
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
- Encourage safe UV exposure whenever UV Index levels are below 3.
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Help students identify the importance of maintaining vitamin D levels all year round and that prolonged exposure to UV is not necessary to boost vitamin D levels.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school’s SunSmart policy.
- Where applicable, staff are encouraged to access the daily SunSmart UV Alert to assist with the implementation of this policy. From September to April in Victoria when average UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
- Students and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Extra care is taken between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when UV levels reach their peak during the day.
- Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events e.g. assemblies, 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.

Procedures

1. Shade

SunSmart Policy reviewed August 2014
• The school makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch, canteen, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.

• In consultation with the school, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.

• A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

• The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities.

• Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.

• Students who do not have appropriate hats must follow our NO HAT NO PLAY procedure.

2. Clothing

• Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. School clothing is made of close weave fabric and includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

3. Hats

• Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, bucket or broad brimmed, whenever they are outside. (Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.)

4. Sunglasses [SUGGESTED]

• 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.

5. Sunscreen

• SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is supplied by individuals.

• Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.

• Students are reminded to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.

Staff OHS and Role modelling

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role modelling, staff:

• Wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside.

• Apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

• Seek shade whenever possible.

Families and 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.

From May to August in Victoria

SunSmart Policy reviewed August 2014
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

• SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, students and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

Review

• The school and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy (at least once every three years) and revise the policy when required.

Relevant Documents / Links


2. Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

3. Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas

4. 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


7. Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight

8. SunSmart UV Alert (issued whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above) sunsmart.com.au or www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv/


10. UV and vitamin D: sunsmart.com.au/vitamin_d

SunSmart Policy reviewed August 2014