

Secondary School Sun Protection Guidance

Support students and teachers at your secondary school to reduce their risk of skin cancer by adopting Cancer Council's sun protection guidance.

Rationale

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Skin cancer, including melanoma and non-melanoma, is the most common cancer in Australia, with melanoma being the most common cancer among young Australians (15-24-year olds).

Ultraviolet radiation (UV) is the source of at least 95% of all skin cancers in Australia. This means that it is highly preventable. By implementing these best-practice sun protection recommendations, secondary schools can help protect staff and students from UV and reduce their risk of skin cancer.

Sun protection is recommended when the UV index is 3 or above. UV levels and daily sun protection times for your location can be accessed via the SunSmart App or Cancer Council Australia's home page to determine sun protection requirements: <https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/uv-alert/sunsmart-app.html>

Recommendations

1. Scheduling outdoor activities

- UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan the time of outdoor activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements.
- When students are on excursions all sun protection practices are planned, organised, understood and encouraged.

2. Shade

- The school community is encouraged to provide shade in areas where students congregate, during recess and lunch, and when teaching outdoors and playing sport.
- Students are encouraged to use available shade when outside.
- Shade assessments are suggested to monitor existing shade structures and determine future shade needs.
- Teachers are encouraged to consider the availability of shade for all outdoor activities and excursions.

Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade. Cancer Council has information online to help the school advocate for more shade and assist in planning.

3. Hats

- All students are encouraged to wear sun safe hats* that protect their face, neck and ears when outside for play, sport and excursions.

* Sun safe hats include:

- Broad-brimmed hats with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).
- Bucket hats with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm).
- Legionnaire style hats.

Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and are therefore not recommended.

4. Clothing

- Sun safe clothing* is encouraged as part of the school and sports uniforms.
- Students are encouraged to wear rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

Sun safe clothing includes wearing:

- Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
- Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.

Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

5. Sunscreen

- All staff and students are encouraged to pack and apply SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
- All staff and students are encouraged to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors, and to reapply every 2 hours when outdoors for extended periods.
- Where possible, sunscreen is available for staff and students.

Cancer Council recommends usage tests before applying a new sunscreen. All sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the expiry dates monitored.

6. Staff Work Health and Safety

Staff are encouraged to follow sun safe behaviours when they are outside, including:

- Wearing a sun safe hat, protective clothing, and wearing sunglasses (optional).
- Applying SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
- Utilising shade.
- Discussing sun protection with students and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the school.

Sun safety is everyone's responsibility. By demonstrating and leading the way with our own sun safety, we can inspire our students to be sun safe when they step outside.

7. Curriculum

- Staff are encouraged to include sun safety principles across Key Learning Areas in all year levels.
- Schools are encouraged to provide students with opportunities to take leadership roles in managing sun protection e.g. presenting to their peers, accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen.
- Students understand why sun safety is important and learn how to take effective sun protection actions.

8. Informing the school community

- Schools are encouraged to inform students of the daily UV protection times via announcements or digital boards displaying the SunSmart app widget.
- Schools are encouraged to inform parents/families of the sun protection guidance including appropriate hats, clothing and sunscreen.
- Schools are encouraged to communicate sun protection information, updates and resources regularly through a range of channels e.g. annual reports, newsletters, notice boards, online, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies and student orientation.
- Families and visitors are encouraged to adopt positive sun safe behaviours when attending the school.

9. Sunglasses (optional)

- Staff and students are encouraged to wear close-fitting wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible and comply with Australian Standard AS1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4).

10. Review

- The school community is encouraged to regularly monitor and review how effectively they implement their sun protection guidance.