

UV Policy template for Secondary Schools

Cancer Council Tasmania recognises the importance of promoting healthy sun protection practices through policy development in schools, therefore, has developed this policy to ensure that staff and students are protected against overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

Over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation in childhood and adolescence is a major risk factor for developing skin cancer later in life. Schools can play a significant role toward reducing the life time risk of skin cancer. Given school hours fall within peak UV periods of the day, this comprehensive evidence-informed policy provides guidelines on effective UV protection strategies. Melanoma is the most common cancer in young Australians aged 15 – 29 yearsⁱ. Over-exposure to UVR causes sunburn, skin damage and increased risk of skin cancer.

This sun protection policy has been developed to ensure that all students, teachers and the school community are protected from skin damage caused by harmful UV radiation from the sun. Being SunSmart in Tasmania means using sun protection when UVR levels reach 3 and above, this occurs from September to April. From May to August, sun protection is not recommended unless near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or working outdoors for extended periods. Therefore, schools need to implement sun protection measures from the beginning of the school year until the end of April and again from the beginning of September until the end of the school year. Implementing sun protection measures throughout Terms 1 and 4 only is insufficient to protect against UVR risks.

Objectives

- Ensure staff and students are protected from over-exposure to UV;
- Educate staff and students on appropriate sun protection;
- Ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for staff and students;
- 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

Strategies

- Staff and students are encouraged to check and record the sun protection times on a daily basis at <http://www.cancertas.org.au/>, <http://www.bom.gov.au/tas/uv/>, www.myuv.com or on the free SunSmart Global UV app.
- Staff and students will use the following sun protection measures when UV levels are 3 and above:

Why have a UV policy?

Schools, in partnership with families and their communities, can play an important role in reducing skin cancer risk for staff, students and the wider school community, given:

- Sun exposure in childhood and adolescence is an important determinant of melanoma and other skin cancers in later lifeⁱⁱ.
- School hours fall within peak UVR periods of the day.
- Schools can influence sun protection practices by creating sun safe environments and guiding behaviours through education and role modelling.
- UV policies can be incorporated into existing health and well-being policies.
- Schools have a duty of care to protect students and staff from harm. A UV policy can assist schools to meet this WH&S obligation.

How to have a UV policy

1. Create a UV policy by implementing **at least one** criteria from each category within the template below. It is anticipated that schools will work towards achieving all these criteria over time.
2. Once the relevant criteria have been selected, email your policy for review and completed Contact Details and Agreement form to sunsmart@cancer.org.au.
3. The final tailored policy will be returned to your school for confirmation.
4. Once the above steps have been completed, your school will be awarded membership to the UV Program. Membership is free and lasts for 3 years.

Selection criteria for UV policy

School Uniform/dress code

The school's uniform/dress code for students and staff applies to all outdoor events on and off-site including PE and sports lessons, interschool sports activities, excursions, camps and free dress days. The following five categories are prevention measures to protect against excessive UVR exposure and need to occur when UVR levels reach 3 and above:

Shade

(Select at least one from the category below)

- The school 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.
 - Availability of shade is considered when planning excursions, camps, sport carnivals and all outdoor activities.
 - Students are encouraged to use shade when outside, particularly if they are not wearing appropriate hats or clothing.
 - The school council/board ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
 - A shade audit assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade. Students without a sun-safe hat or clothing must remain in the shade.
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Hats

All students and teachers are encouraged to wear sun-safe hats that protect the face, neck and ears when outside. Recommended sun-safe hats include legionnaire, broad-brimmed and bucket hats. Caps and sun visors do not offer enough protection and are not recommended. One of the following styles must be available for students to purchase:

(Select at least one from the category below)

- Broad-brimmed (at least 7cm) hat
 - Bucket style (6cm) hat
 - Legionnaire's style hat
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Clothing

Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform/dress code and sports uniform in the following ways:

(Select at least one from the category below)

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

(Select at least one from the category below)

- The school supplies SPF50 broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students to use in places such as classrooms and around the school yard.
 - Students are encouraged to bring their own SPF50 broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to school.
 - 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). Sunscreen should be stored in a cool, dry place and the expiry date monitored.
 - Strategies are in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (e.g., reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies) with time for this scheduled into the daily routine.
 - Students and staff are encouraged to apply sunscreen before coming to school.
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Sunglasses

Close-fitting wrap-around sunglasses that comply with Australian Standards AS1067 (Category 2, 3 or 4) are encouraged for staff and students.

Selection criteria for UV policy

The following five categories are sun protection measures for the school community:

Learning

(Select at least one from the category below)

- Sun protection and UV safety education is incorporated into the curriculum for all year levels. 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 reminders and supporting sunscreen application.
 - 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/new staff orientation.
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Staff role-modelling and OHS

(Select at least one from the category below)

- As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff:
 - wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
 - apply SPF50 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen; and
 - seek shade whenever possible.
 - SunSmart information is included in staff handbook/orientation materials.
 - 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.
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Planning

(Select at least one from the category below)

- The UV policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events and excursions.
- Where possible, outdoor activities from September–April, will be scheduled outside of peak UVR times (when UVR levels reach 3 and above).

Monitoring and review

Our school is committed to our SunSmart membership and complete a 3 yearly policy review and membership renewal with Cancer Council Tasmania. SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families, students and visitors. As registered SunSmart members, we have submitted a copy of our policy to SunSmart and commit to implementing the sun protection measures as documented.

Relevant documents/links

[Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Tasmania](#)

<https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety>

[Sun Protection Policy \(education.tas.gov.au\)](http://www.generationsunsmart.com.au/)

<http://www.generationsunsmart.com.au/>

<https://www.sunsmart.com.au/>

[Sun protection resources and information for secondary schools](#)

[Sun protection advice for parents and carers](#)

[Sun protection information in different languages](#)

[Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#)

[Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)

Date:

Review date:

This information is based on current evidence available at time of review. Last updated: July 2023

For more information:

e: sunsmart@cancertas.org.au p: 1300 65 65 85

ⁱ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Cancer in adolescents and young adults in Australia. Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011 Cancer series no. 62. Cat. no. CAN 59

ⁱⁱ Whiteman DC, Whiteman CA, Green AC. Childhood sun exposure as a risk factor for melanoma: a systematic review of epidemiologic studies. Cancer Causes Control. 2001;12:69–82.