Rationale

A healthy balance of the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation 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 known to be 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 10am – 3pm 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 objectives of this UV 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.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school’s UV radiation 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.)

Shade

- The School ensures shade is available in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate – for example, lunch areas, outdoor courts, and outdoor lesson areas.
- The School ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Processes for the planning of outdoor activities and excursions include the consideration of shade.
- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- Students are encouraged to use shade when outside particularly if they are not wearing appropriate hats or clothing.

Clothing, hats and sunglasses

- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform and sports uniform in the following ways.
- The summer uniform includes longer style skirts/shorts/pants at least to the knee.
- The sport uniform includes a shirt that covers the shoulders well and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears (i.e. broadbrimmed or bucket hats), whenever they are outside. During sports classes, baseball caps are worn where a broad brimmed or bucket hat maybe impractical.

The sport uniform includes longer style shorts/pants at least to the mid-thigh.

Rash vests or T-shirts are compulsory for outdoor swimming, when students are waiting to compete.

Students and staff are encouraged to wear closefitting, 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.

Sunscreen

SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students’ use and students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school.

Staff encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outside.

With appropriate consultation, students with naturally very dark skin (skin that rarely or never burns) are not required to wear sunscreen.

The school community is educated about the correct use of sunscreen and the level of protection it provides.

Scheduling

This policy is considered in the planning of all outdoor events such as 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.

Staff OHS and Role modelling

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role modelling, staff are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when outside. 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

(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.

Sun protection measures are only required when in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

Curriculum

Educational programs on skin cancer prevention and healthy UV exposure for vitamin D are incorporated into appropriate areas of the school curriculum. Appropriate UV exposure measures are regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, staff meetings and school assemblies.

Professional development for staff

Appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff training to enable staff to work safety outdoors and to encourage them to be positive role models. Information on appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff booklets. New staff are given a copy of this policy.

Review of policy

The School regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of the UV policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required. Next policy review: January 2015
Relevant Documents / Links

This policy is based on the advice of the Cancer Council of Australia – SunSmart Program. The following documents relate to the policy.

2. Building Quality Standards Handbook: Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
3. 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
6. Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight
7. SunSmart sunsmart.com.au
8. SunSmart UV Alert (issued whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above) sunsmart.com.au or
   www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv/September 2010