



ST. MARGARET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST GEELONG

SUNSMART POLICY

Rationale

It is important to have a healthy balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure. Too much UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

St. Margaret's Primary School is a registered Sun Smart school. Our Sun Smart Policy has been developed to ensure that all students and staff attending this school are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. It is to be implemented throughout the year but with particular emphasis from September to the end of April.

Aims

The aim of the Sun Smart Policy is to provide procedures and curriculum which will enhance the knowledge of the sun's effect on our lives, and the practices that assist in a healthy lifestyle when exposed to the effect of the sun.

Objectives

This SunSmart Policy has been developed to:

- Ensure all students and staff get some UV for vitamin D.
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above to minimise skin and eye damage and skin cancer risk.
- 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 SunSmart policy.

Staff are encouraged to access the SunSmart UV Alert at sunsmart.com.au to find out daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

We use a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities from September to the end of April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, the level that can damage skin and eyes.

Implementation

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.

As part of general Sun Smart strategies, our school has identified a threefold approach to implementing the Sun Smart Policy. The approach covers the areas of behaviour, curriculum and environment.

Behaviour:

- Children are required to wear broad-rimmed school hats, which protect the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside (e.g. play breaks, sport, and excursions; compulsory from September to the end of April).
- Encourage parents / guardians to provide their children with sunscreen.
- Encourage the daily application of sunscreen before school and prior to play breaks.
- Encourage children to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities.
- Encourage staff and parents to act as role models by practising Sun Smart behaviours.
- On days of extreme heat, the children will not be permitted to play outside for long periods of time. An Extreme Weather Program will be called and children will stay indoors wherever possible.
- On days of extreme heat, children will participate in and inside specialist physical education program.

Curriculum:

- Incorporate programs on skin cancer prevention into the curriculum at all grade levels.
- Regularly reinforce Sun Smart behaviours in a positive way through newsletters, as well as student and teacher activities.
- Ensure that the Sun Smart policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events (e.g. camps, excursions, sporting events).

Environment:

- Organise outdoor activities to be held in areas of shade whenever possible.
- Work towards increasing the number of shelters and trees so as to provide adequate shade in the school grounds.

Statement Considerations

1. Shade

- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- 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. outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities.
- In consultation with the School Leaders, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to stay inside.

2. Clothing

- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. School clothing is cool, loose fitting and made of densely woven fabric. It includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts.

3. Hats

- All students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket hats, whenever they are outside. Baseball or peak caps are not considered a suitable alternative.

4. Sunglasses [OPTIONAL]

- 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

- Students must provide their own SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

6. Physical Education

- “No Hat, No Play” from September to the end of April; students without the correct school hat will not be permitted to participate in Physical Education or Interschool Sport.
- Sunscreen will be encouraged by all staff.
- Correct sports uniform must be worn to all P.E. lessons and sports days; this includes a collared shirt (where the collar sits above the collar bone) and a minimum of mid-thigh length shorts / skirts / pants.
- Sports requiring students to wear a specific singlet (supplied by the P.E. Department) are those of cross country, athletics, basketball and football. When students participate in these sports they are required to wear their sports uniform over the top of these singlets until the event actually begins.
- Decisions based on the appropriateness of particular students dress in relation to this policy will be made by the Sport Coordinator or a School Leader.

7. Staff OHS and Role Modelling

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, when the UV is 3 and above staff:

- wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
- apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible

8. Curriculum

- Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum for all year levels.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

Relevant Documents/ Links

- The Compact: Roles and Responsibilities in Victorian government school education: Principle 3 (2012)
- DEECD School Policy & Advisory Guide (SPAG) Sun & UV protection (2011)
- DEECD Health, Safety & Workcover
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Occupational Health & Safety Guidelines
- Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) Compliance Framework
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 8.5.5 Shade Areas (Oct 2011)
- Education and Training Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools -Government Response
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight (2008)
- AS 4685.1: 2014 Playground equipment and surfacing – General safety requirements and test methods

Evaluation and Review

Staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart Policy (at least once every three years) and revise the policy when required.

As a part of this process they will:

- Review the Sun Smart behaviours of students, staff, parents, and visitors and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Assess shade provision and usage and make recommendations for improvements where necessary.
- Update and promote curriculum material relevant to Sun Smart activities.

Developed: 2015

Review: 2019