

	<b>Carlton Gardens Primary School</b>	<b>Authorisation 2023</b>  <b>Review 2025</b>
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<b>Sun and UV Protection Policy</b>
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## Policy

The purpose of this policy is to create school environments that support sun protection behaviours to minimise the risk of health problems from sun overexposure, including skin cancer.

## Summary

Schools should:

- support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV index levels are 3 or above (generally from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria, which covers most of the school year)
- develop and implement local policy and procedures promoting sun-safe practices in consultation with students, staff and parents. A local [Sun Protection Policy template](#) is available on the [School Policy Templates Portal](#) (staff login required) for schools to modify to suit their local circumstances
- review, and if necessary update, the Sun Protection Policy at least once every 3 to 4 years.

## Details

### About skin cancer

The main cause of skin cancer is exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Overexposure to the sun's UV radiation during childhood and adolescence is a major risk for future skin cancer.

Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Schools play an important role in promoting and teaching sun and UV protection behaviours that students benefit from throughout life.

Melanoma is one of the most diagnosed cancers in young Victorians aged 15 to 29 years. It is the third most diagnosed cancer in Australia.

## Ultraviolet radiation

UV radiation:

- cannot be seen or felt
- can be reflected off surfaces such as buildings, asphalt, concrete, water, sand and snow
- can pass through light clouds
- varies in intensity across the day and the year (highest from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria)
- is at its peak during school hours.

Overexposure to UV radiation can cause:

- sunburn
- skin damage
- eye damage
- premature ageing
- skin cancer.

A combination of sun protection measures is recommended for all skin types when UV levels reach 3 or higher. At these levels, damage can occur to skin and eyes.

Each time skin is damaged by UV, changes take place in the structure and function of the skin cells. If UV damage continues, skin cells become less able to repair, increasing the risk of skin cancer.

## School obligations

School staff have a duty of care and obligations under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#) to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks to both staff and student health and safety arising from exposure to UV. These obligations can be met by:

- developing a local Sun Protection Policy that includes evidence-informed sun protection strategies. A local [Sun Protection Policy template](#) is available on the [School Policy Templates Portal](#) (staff login required) for schools to modify to suit their local circumstances
- providing adequate shade
- adopting student uniform or dress codes which include sun-protective clothing using hats, sunglasses and sunscreen
- staff role-modelling personal sun-protection behaviours
- engaging directly with students, staff and families to support sun protection strategies and behaviours.

During the daily local sun protection times (those times when UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher, refer to the sun protection times section on this page) all staff and students should follow the sun protection measures listed in this policy.

Occupational health and safety (OHS) risk controls should consider the school environment including:

- creating shade
- modifying highly reflective surfaces
- higher risk times in Victoria between mid-August to the end of April (inclusive)
- outdoor programming schedules
- dress codes.

UV radiation exposure should be considered as part of the school's risk management and assessment for all outdoor events and activities. For example, UV radiation protection strategies are included in school camp activities, excursions, sports days, swimming carnivals and interschool sports events. For more information on risk management for outdoor activities and events refer to:

- [Outdoor Activities and Working Outdoors](#)
- [Excursions](#)

## Communication

Schools should communicate sun protection measures to their school community. Schools can do this:

- in their school newsletters
- on the school's website, intranet or noticeboard
- in student diaries
- at staff and parent meetings
- during school assemblies
- before and during excursions, camps, sports carnivals and events
- as part of student enrolment and staff induction processes.

SunSmart has resources to communicate with [primary schools](#) and [secondary schools](#).

## Sun protection times

The daily sun protection times let schools know when sun protection is needed each day. These are available:

- via the free [SunSmart app and widget](#)
- on the [SunSmart](#) and [Bureau of Meteorology](#) websites
- in the weather section of the newspaper.

Schools should consider:

- accessing the daily sun protection times to determine when sun protection is required for their location
- adding the [SunSmart](#) website as a favourite or uploading the free [SunSmart widget](#) to the school's website or intranet

- enlisting students to help monitor the daily sun protection times and report them to the school community via the daily bulletin, noticeboard, assembly or PA announcements.

If schools are unable to access the sun protection times daily, the sun protection measures listed in this policy should be used from mid-August to the end of April.

Certain health conditions and medications may mean some people are more sensitive to UV radiation and need to use sun protection at all times regardless of UV levels. This may apply to students with [identified health care needs](#). Schools should refer to these students' student health support plan for more information if necessary.

## Sun protection measures

For health and safety, schools should take each of the following UV protections measures when UV levels are 3 or above.

SunSmart offers resources to support schools, including the [SunSmart Schools Program](#) and [Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! Slide!](#)

## Shade

The school council and principal must ensure there is provision for shade in planning for future buildings or grounds. Schools should consider the availability of shade and other appropriate sun protection measures when planning excursions and other outdoor activities or events.

It is important to ensure that there are sufficient shelters and trees to adequately shade the school grounds, particularly in the following spaces:

- the canteen and where students eat lunch
- outdoor lesson areas
- popular play areas
- assembly areas
- sporting grounds/pools.

Students should be encouraged to use available areas of shade when outdoors, particularly if they do not have appropriate hats or covering clothing. SunSmart has further information on [shade](#).

## Clothing

The school's [uniform or dress code policy](#) for students must include sun-protective clothing such as:

- fabrics with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating for sun protection
- cool, loose-fitting clothing made of densely woven fabrics
- tops/shirts with collars or high necklines, and sleeves of at least elbow-length
- longer style pants, shorts, dresses or skirts

- rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities and events.

Singlet tops offer little protection and are not considered a suitable alternative.

SunSmart has further information on [clothing](#).

## Hats

Students and staff should wear hats which protect the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears. These include:

- broad-brimmed hats
- legionnaire hats
- bucket hats.

Baseball or peaked caps and sun visors are not considered a suitable alternative, as they do not protect the ears, cheeks or neck.

SunSmart has further information on [hats](#).

## Sunglasses

Where possible, schools should encourage students and staff to wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible.

Sunglasses should meet the following requirements:

- Australian or New Zealand standard AS or NZS 1067.1:2016 (with lens category 2, 3 or 4, not fashion spectacles)
- preferably have sunglass lenses with an eye protection factor (EPF) rating of either 9 or 10 or be labelled UV 400.

SunSmart has further information on [sunglasses](#).

## Sunscreen

Schools should encourage and remind students and staff to:

- apply SPF30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before going outdoors
- re-apply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors or more frequently after swimming or sweating.

Schools should:

- where possible, encourage students to bring sunscreen to school
- consider making SPF30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen available for staff and students to access (if schools have capacity to provide

sunscreen, the location should be communicated to all staff and students and be readily accessible)

- monitor the sunscreen expiry date
- store sunscreen below 30°C
- develop strategies to remind students to apply their own sunscreen before going outdoors (for example, reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies, sunscreen stations near entry and exit points).

Students and staff should not rely on sunscreen as a sole line of defence against UV. It should be used together with the other sun protection measures outlined in this policy.

Further guidance on sunscreen is available on the [Guidance tab](#).

## Sunscreen reaction or allergy

The risk of allergies and cross infection from sunscreen use is very low. But where a student has experienced a reaction to sunscreen, parents or independent students should be encouraged to try a sensitive or alternative formula, consult their doctor or seek a referral to a dermatologist to understand what may have caused a reaction and gain advice on ingredients that should be avoided in the future. Other sun protection measures should be followed when sunscreen can't be used.

## Role-modelling and occupational health and safety

As part of OHS risk control and role-modelling for students, during sun protection times when the UV levels are 3 or above, staff are encouraged to:

- wear broad-brimmed hats, clothing and sunglasses for all outdoor activities and duties
- apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible.

During sun protection times, families and visitors participating in and attending outdoor school activities should be asked to also role-model and practice sun protection behaviours. SunSmart has [sun and UV protection advice for parents and carers](#).

## Curriculum

Schools should ensure that education about skin cancer prevention is included in the curriculum for all year levels, where appropriate.

SunSmart has free classroom resources for [primary schools](#) and [secondary schools](#).

## About Vitamin D

Sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

When the UV index level is 3 or above (generally from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria) most students and staff can maintain adequate vitamin D levels by spending a few minutes outdoors on most days of the week.

When the UV index level falls below 3, sun protection is not usually required unless at high altitudes, near highly reflective surfaces like snow, or outside for extended periods.

## Related policies

- [Heat Health](#)
- [Outdoor Activities and Working Outdoors](#)
- [Risk Management – Schools](#)
- [Shade Sails](#)
- [Student Dress Code](#)

## Relevant legislation

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#)

Guidance