

Policy SUNSMART

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 reach the age of 70. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is known to be a 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 the beginning of September to the end of April. During these months particular care should be taken during the middle of the day 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. 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 or near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or water.

Policy Statement

This policy encourages the school to minimise the danger of excessive UV radiation exposure for staff, students and parents, to ensure a healthier environment with long-term benefits for the whole school community at Croydon Hills Primary School. Our general duty of care as educators is to ensure the wellbeing of students under our care or supervision; this extends to a specific duty to protect them against harmful exposure to the sun.

The goals of the SunSmart Policy are to:

- Ensure that all children 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.
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for children, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
- Assist children to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's SunSmart policy.

Implementation

Curriculum

- Programs on skin cancer prevention and healthy UV exposure levels are included in the curriculum for all year levels through Life Education and Healthy Inquiry units.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

Environment

From September to April in Victoria

When average UV Index levels reach 3 and above.

- Children and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above. Particular care is taken between 10am and 3pm when UV Index levels reach their peak during the day.
- Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events, i.e. assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events. Where possible, have outdoor activities or events earlier in the morning or later in the

afternoon, or we try using indoor venues. Notices for parents related to outdoor activities must mention the school's sun smart approach and say that students should bring sunscreen.

- In the event of extreme temperatures (35C or above), students will be kept indoors during recess and lunch times.

1. Shade

- The school council makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where children congregate, i.e. lunch, canteen, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.

- In consultation with the school council, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.

- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities.

- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.

- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

2. Clothing

- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. School clothing is made of close weave fabric and includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

3. Hats

- Children and staff are required to wear hats in Term 1 and Term 4 that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside. Students without hats at school are required to stay in a designated area in the shade.

4. Sunscreen

It is recommended that:

- SPF 30+ is applied on children prior to arriving at school in the morning. Students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school for reapplication during the day.

- Children are reminded to apply sunscreen before going outdoors or when at outdoor activities. Teachers to take sunscreen with the first aid kit from September to April

Role modelling

Staff act as role models by:

- wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside.

- applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

- seeking shade whenever possible.

- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

References:

- DET School Policy & Advisory Guide (SPAG) Sun & UV protection (2011)

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

- 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

- Cancer Council Victoria

Review

- As part of the school's cyclic process.