

SUNSMART PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to encourage behaviours at Yarraville Special Developmental School to minimise the risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV index levels are 3 or above (generally mid-August – end of April)
- ensure that there are outdoor environments that provide adequate shade for students and staff
- ensure students are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills to help them to be responsible for their own protection
- support our school's strategies to meet its duty of care and occupational health and safety obligations to minimise harmful UV exposure and associated harm for students and staff.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It is applicable to all students and staff.

POLICY:

Excessive exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause health problems including sunburn, damage to skin and eyes, and an increased risk of skin cancer.

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 year (highest in Victoria from mid-August – end of April)
- peaks during school hours

Sun safety is a shared responsibility and staff, parents and students are encouraged to implement a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above (typically from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria). Information about the daily local sun protection times is available via the SunSmart widget on the school's website, the free SunSmart app, or at sunsmart.com.au or bom.gov.au.

Yarraville Special Developmental School has the following measures in place to help reduce the risk of excessive UV sun exposure for staff and students.

Provision of Shade:

Understanding the unique cohort of students at YSDS, certain UV protection strategies (such as guaranteed hat use or sunscreen application) are prohibitively difficult to *fully* enforce. Shade is particularly important to our UV protection rationale.

YSDS will:

- Over time, increase the proportion of shaded play spaces in our grounds.
- Encourage students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing to choose a shady space or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- Encourage students, generally, to play in shaded areas of our grounds.
- Where practical, ensure outdoor activities are held in shaded areas of our grounds.

Awareness:

YSDS will:

- Involve students in learning activities to develop an awareness of being UV safe.
- Encourage staff to model UV safe behaviour.
- Seek ongoing support from parents, and the wider school community, for UV safety awareness through timely notices in our newsletter.
- Students who require specific plans for hot days will have them in place.

Sunscreen & clothing:

YSDS will:

- Require students to wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible, such as tops with elbow-length sleeves, higher necklines (or collars) and knee-length or longer shorts and skirts. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric will be recommended. Students wearing singlets or shoestring dresses will be encouraged to choose a t-shirt to wear, as extra coverage, before going outdoors.
- Encourage students and staff to wear hats that protect the face, neck and ears (wide brimmed or bucket hats) when outside.
- Encourage students to use SPF 30+ (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, available in classrooms, when outside.
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes (where possible) before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours or more frequently if sweating.
- Strategies are in place to support and remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (sunscreen monitors, SunSmart posters).

Scheduling:

YSDS will:

- Avoid scheduling outdoor activities, in areas without shade, during peak UV times (from mid-August to the end of April).
- Revert to indoor timetables, for recess and lunch, at peak UV times if other sun protection measures can't be used.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school three-year review cycle.

- YSDS will conduct a shade audit every three years.

This policy was ratified by school council on: 23rd of February 2021