

SUNSMART POLICY



Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to encourage behaviours at Diamond Creek Primary School that reflect a healthy UV exposure balance, ensuring some sun exposure for vitamin D while minimising the risk of 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 to end April) and allow sun exposure when UV levels are below 3 (generally May – early August)
- 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.

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

A balance of sun exposure is important for health. Excessive exposure to the sun can cause health problems including sunburn, dehydration, damage to skin and eyes, and an increased risk of skin cancer.

Too little UV exposure from the sun can lead to low Vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy muscles and bones, and overall health.

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 September - April)
- Peaks during school hours

A combination of sun protection measures should be put in place from mid-August to the end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.

Aims:

- To ensure all students and staff are protected from over-exposure to UV radiation
- To educate students as to suitable sunsmart protection strategies
- To ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for students and staff
- To ensure students are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills to help them be responsible for their own sun protection
- To encourage children and teachers to get some sun exposure for vitamin D and protect themselves from the harmful effects of overexposure to the sun
- To support duty of care requirements; and
- To support appropriate OHS strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for staff and visitors.

Implementation:

- This policy is to be read in conjunction with our Student Dress Code, which includes shirts with collars, and elbow length sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts. Children will be required to wear Cancer Council approved close-weave broad brimmed hats from Mid-August till the end of April whenever they are outside.
- Children without broad brimmed hats will be restricted to play in the designated shaded area – under the shade sail.
- Staff will act as role models by also wearing broad brimmed hats when outside.
- Staff are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.
- A combination of sun protection measures are used for all outdoor activities from mid-August to the end of April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- Children will be actively encouraged to wear a broad-spectrum water resistant sunscreen (SPF30 or higher). Students will be encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school, on excursions and camps and will apply their own.
- Students will be reminded to apply it at least 20 minutes (where possible) before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoor activity last for this period of time. Students will be encouraged to apply before school and they will be reminded to reapply to cover the recess and lunch breaks and other outdoor activities beyond that
- With parental consent, students with naturally very dark skin are not required to wear sunscreen to help with vitamin D requirements.
- Whenever possible, outside activities on hot days should be scheduled early in the day.
- The school will provide adequate shade structures for students as practicable.
- For parents who purchase uniform out of school we recommend purchasing UV protective clothing.
- The school will ensure that school uniform hats are available for purchase from the school.
- The school newsletter and school assemblies will be used to highlight and reinforce the sunsmart policy and procedures.
- Sunsmart activities and sun protection will form part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum at all year levels.
- The school will continue membership as a Sunsmart school at the Cancer Council Victoria.

Diamond Creek Primary School has the following measures in place to help reduce the risk of excessive UV sun exposure for staff and students.

Shade

Diamond Creek Primary School will provide for sufficient options for shelter and trees to provide shade on school grounds, particularly in places such as:

- The shade sail area where students congregate for eating at recess and lunch and for passive play
- Outdoor lesson areas
- Popular play areas
- Assembly areas

When building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Diamond Creek Primary School that may impact on the level of shading available to staff and students, a review of the shaded areas available will be conducted and further shading installed as appropriate.

Sun protective uniform/clothing

Diamond Creek Primary School recommends that from mid-August to end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, students wear sun-protective clothing such as:

- Loose, cool, closely-woven fabric
- Shirts with a collar and/or high necklines
- Tops with elbow length or long sleeves
- Longer style shorts, dresses and skirts
- Rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities.

Diamond Creek Primary School's school uniform and dress code includes the sun-protective clothing as listed above.

At recess and lunch times and for all outside activities, from mid-August to end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, all students **must** wear a hat when playing outside.

Staff and students are encouraged to wear hat styles that protect the face, neck and ears when outdoors, for example broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket. Students must wear the school hat approved by School Council, which is certified 50+ rating. Students who may not be wearing appropriate protective clothing or a hat will be asked to play in the shade sail area.

Sunscreen

Diamond Creek Primary School encourages all staff and students to apply SPF 30+ (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen daily at a minimum from mid- August to the end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors, and reapplied every two hours if necessary.

Diamond Creek Primary School has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors where teachers will remind students at agreed times during the day. Students must provide their own SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. The Diamond Creek Primary school council has recommended that students be asked to bring their own sunscreen to eliminate the issues of allergic reaction to sunscreen, which may previously have been provided at school.

Staff and families should role model SunSmart behaviour and are encouraged to apply SPF 30+ (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen when outside from mid-August to the end of April or whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.

Curriculum

Students at our school are encouraged to make healthy choices, and are supported to understand the benefits and risks of sun exposure. Diamond Creek Primary School will address sun, UV safety and Vitamin D education as part of Student Wellbeing instruction.

Staff are encouraged to access resources, tools, and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote sun smart behaviour and Vitamin D education across the school community.

Engaging students, staff and families

Families and staff will be provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to support UV safety and Vitamin D education at school and at home. Diamond Creek Primary School may provide families and staff with information through communication strategies including newsletters, and school assemblies.

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff, families and visitors:

- Wear a sun protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
- Apply sunscreen; and
- Seek shade whenever possible.

Legislation and Standards

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#): Sch.5 Reg. 1 (1.2)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Department of Education and Training School Policy Advisory Guide:

- [Sun and UV Protection Policy](#)
- [Duty of care](#)
- [SunSmart](#)
- [Achievement Program's SunSmart policy](#)

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy is listed for review as per the school's policy review schedule (EVERY 3 YEARS).

The policy will also be reviewed as new regulations are provided from the authorities (SunSmart Schools, Cancer Council).