

Policy Number	Ratification Date	Reviewed	Review Date
69	April 2019	Feb 2021	Feb 2023



# SUNSMART & EXTREME HEAT POLICY

## Definition

Outdoor play is important for student's learning development and to maintain a healthy active lifestyle. However, 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, therefore students must be adequately protected from the UV.

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

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Over exposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is now a major cause of skin cancer. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before they reach the age of 70.

Sun protection is needed whenever UV levels reach three or above, which can also occur on cloudy days. 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 (within schools hours) when UV levels reach their peak.

From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three so sun protection isn't normally needed during these months.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage behaviours at Elsternwick Primary 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)
- outline outdoor environments that provide adequate shade for students and staff
- encourage and support students 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

## Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff and visitors at the school and during external school activities, including camps and excursions.

## Policy

Sun safety is a shared responsibility and staff, parents/carers 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). This is commonly referred to as SunSmart behaviour. Information about the daily local sun protection times is available via the free SunSmart app, or at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) or [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au)

Elsternwick Primary School has the following measures in place to help reduce the risk of excessive UV sun exposure for staff and students. Staff act as role models at all times in promoting sun-safe behaviour by wearing sun-protective clothing, including hats and covered shoulders, when outdoors.

### **Shade**

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

- outdoor lesson areas
- popular play areas
- assembly areas
- sporting grounds

If building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Elsternwick 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**

Elsternwick Primary School's school uniform and dress code includes sun-protective clothing and it is recommended that from mid-August to end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, students come to school wearing 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 and skirts
- rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities
- brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat

From September to 30 April, all students **must** wear a school approved sun protective hat (broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket) that shades the face, neck and ears for all outdoor activities. Students who are not wearing appropriate protective clothing or a hat will be asked to play in the shade or in a suitable area protected from the sun. Hats may also be worn for all outdoor activities between September to April, by parent/carer or student choice.

### **Sunscreen**

Staff and Students at Elsternwick Primary School model SunSmart behaviour and are encouraged to apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen daily whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors, and reapplied every two hours according to [manufacturer's instructions](#).

Elsternwick Primary School provides sunscreen for each classroom. The school has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors, these include:

- sun screen stations in each classroom, introduced by the wellbeing leaders
- Sunscreen Monitors, responsible for checking and recording the UV rating each day and administering sunscreen before play and outdoor learning experiences
- an outdoor sunscreen station to reapply during playtime
- daily announcements from First Aid Officer to remind students to apply sunscreen
- UV protection posters to remind students of SunSmart behaviour

Students are welcome to attend the school First Aid Officer to access sunscreen located in the First Aid room. Staff and students who may suffer from allergic reactions from certain types of sunscreen are encouraged to contact the school to implement a management plan and supply suitable sunscreen from home to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction at school.

### **Curriculum**

Students at EPS are encouraged to make healthy choices, and are supported to understand the benefits and risks of sun exposure. Elsternwick Primary School will address sun and UV safety education as part of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Staff regularly access resources, tools, and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote sun smart behaviour across the school community.

### **Engaging students, staff and families**

SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school Compass reminders, daily announcements, staff and parent/carer meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and at student enrolment/new staff orientation.

### **Extreme Heat**

Schools do not close at a certain temperature threshold during days of extreme heat. However, EPS has strategies to manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather and heat wave, including indoor play during recess and lunch in the event of extreme temperatures and regular reminders to students to keep hydrated by drinking water.

### **Further information and resources**

[Duty of care](#)

[SunSmart](#)

### **Review cycle**

This policy was last updated in February 2021 and is scheduled for review in February 2023.

### **Resources**

- [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)
- <http://www.sunsmart.com.au/communities/early-childhood-primary-schools>
- <http://www.cliftonhills.vic.edu.au/sub/files/policy/sunsmart-and-extreme-heat-policy-2010.pdf>
- <http://ohsrep.org.au/hazards/workplace-conditions/heat>
- <http://www.ohsrep.org.au/faqs/workplace-and-amenities/heat-when-is-it-too-hot>
- <http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/pages/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/working-in-heat>