



SUN PROTECTION, UV AND HOT WEATHER

SCHOOL POLICY

St Joseph's School, Ottoway

Reviewed: Term 1, 2024

Next Review Due: Term 1, 2027

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

Skin damage, including skin cancer is caused by cumulative exposure to the sun. Sun exposure during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. St Joseph's School is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its educators, children and visitors. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer in their lifetime. Too much of the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Infants and toddlers up to four years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower levels of melanin and a thinner stratum corneum (the outermost layer of skin). UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life (Cancer Council Australia).

School policy for sun protection has been informed by the Cancer Council South Australia's "Sun Smart primary school policy guidelines, and DECD policies.

- That it is important to balance sun protection with safe sun exposure for the production of vitamin D for bone growth and development. Sensible sun protection when UV is 3 and above does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the St Joseph's School Sun Protection Policy are to promote among students, staff, parents and carers,

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths in the wider community
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection
- Awareness of the importance of balance between UV exposure and protection.

Implementation

In line with DECD and Cancer Council SA Guidelines and St Joseph's School Sun Smart status, sun protective strategies will be implemented from 1 August to 30 April and when the UV radiation levels are 3 and above at other times.

The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times. The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) or the time-of-day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, a combination of sun protection is recommended for all skin types. To assist with implementation, staff access the daily sun protection times each morning via the SunSmart global UV app, Bureau of Meteorology website or www.myuv.com.au.

Scheduling of Outdoor Activities

A combination of sun protection measures is considered when planning all outdoor activities such as excursions and water play

Extra care is taken during the peak UV radiation times and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times where possible.

Strategies include:

- Extended recess and shortened lunch break
- Eat lunch inside
- Eat lunch in a shaded area
- Organise Sport to be held in the morning
- Indoor play promoted
- Outdoor assemblies held indoors

Shade

The Approved Provider will ensure:

- sufficient natural, portable, or man-made shade is provided, particularly in high use areas
- staff are to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities as much as possible and actively encourage students to play in the shade
- regular risk assessments and reviews will be made of the outdoor area to assist in planning for further shade requirements
- children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun and not move to unshaded areas of the playground
- children will still be required to wear hats, protective clothing, and sunscreen if playing under natural or portable shade

Hats

Educators, children, and visitors are required to wear sun safe hats at all times they are outdoors. Cancer Council Australia describes sun safe hats as:

- Hats that protect a person's face, neck, and ears, which include:
 - a legionnaire hat – the front peak and flap should overlap at the sides and the flap should cover the neck
 - a bucket hat with a deep crown and angled brim that is size of at least 5cm for young children and at least 6cm for adults and must shade the face, neck, and ears
 - a broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm for children or 7.5cm for adults. The brim should provide shade for the whole face.

Please note: Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

- Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun or they may be provided with a spare hat if available.

Clothing

Whenever outdoors, educators, staff and children will wear sun safe clothing, that covers as much of the skin as possible. Cancer Council Australia recommends clothing that:

- ✓ covers the shoulders, back and stomach
- ✓ is loose fitting such as loose-fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline, or longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.

Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing, if available or will be required to play under shade or in an area protected from the sun or provided with spare clothing.

Please note: Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Sunscreen

As per Cancer Council Australia recommendations:

- staff and children will apply **SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes** before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours or more frequently if washed or wiped off
- where children have allergies or sensitivity to the sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen. A record of any allergy must be provided in writing from the parent/guardian and recorded on the child's enrolment record. Cancer Council Australia recommends usage tests before applying a new sunscreen.
- If consent for a child to wear sunscreen at school is withdrawn, families are encouraged to seek advice from their GP and work with the school to minimise overexposure to UV radiation in other ways
- sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date monitored.

Risks of summer play

Australia has a hot climate and inevitably playground equipment and surfacing can heat up rapidly and retain heat. Many playground surfaces and equipment can exceed temperatures greater than 50°C and if young children come into contact with these surfaces, they can be burned severely within seconds. Surfaces can retain heat for long periods of time and cause burns to children. Play surfaces must be monitored before children have access to the outdoor environment.

Severe Heat

Severe heat or heatwaves are periods of unusually hot weather. Climate change is resulting in more intense heatwaves in Australia and presents an extreme risk to the health and safety of children. Children, especially young children can dehydrate quickly which can cause heat-related illness including heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Active heatwave warnings are indicated within the Australian Warning System (AWS) and range from Advice to Emergency Warning. Risk management measures must be implemented and managed to ensure children remain safe and healthy during a severe heat event.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- ensure obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations* are met
- ensure risk assessments are conducted to identify any potential hazards to children during summer months that could cause harm or injury to children. Risk minimisation control measures will be put in place to protect children. Potential hazards could include:
 - hot equipment- slides, poles, guardrails, any metal surfaces
 - hot surfaces- rubber and synthetic grass, walkways, concrete surfaces
 - sun burn and dehydration
 - access to bodies of water (filled water troughs/containers/trays/pools)
 - severe heat
 - bushfires and air pollution
- check all Playgrounds, Surface Temperature Check during summer months or extreme hot weather
- use a thermometer or their hand to test surface temperature and make an informed decision about permitting children to play on equipment or in the outdoor space. If the surface temperature is determined to be too hot or is recorded as at or above 50°C it is recommended by Kidsafe Australia that children do NOT play on the surface

- ensure children wear shoes when playing in the outdoor area
- monitor the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) for severe heat weather warnings and implement procedures to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff
- monitor bush fire activity and be aware of air quality and hazardous levels of air pollution caused by bushfires (see: Bushfire Policy)
- ensure children have access to water at all times throughout the day and remind them to take extra drinks during hot weather to avoid dehydration
- be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness children and implement first aid as required
- keep children indoors during severe heat events
- ensure fans/air conditioning are used to help keep children cool
- close blinds/curtains where required to prevent sun shining into rooms
- adhere to SA health department advice for hot weather risks and recommendations

Role Modelling and Work, Health and Safety

Cancer Council Australia acknowledges that children are more likely to develop sun-safe habits if they are role-modelled and demonstrated by adults around them. Occupational UV exposure is also a WH&S issue. All educators, staff at St Joseph's will therefore be required to role model appropriate sun protection behaviours by:

- wearing a sun safe hat (see Hats)
- wearing sun safe clothing (see Clothing)
- applying SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors
- using and promoting shade
- wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (optional)
- discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the school
- families and visitors are encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour
- monitoring the UV Index Levels and Daily Sun Protection Times each morning
- regularly monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the *Sun Safety Policy*

Education and Information

- Sun protection will be incorporated into the curriculum for all year events
- Sun protection information will be promoted to staff, families and visitors
- Educators and staff are encouraged to complete free Cancer Council Generation SunSmart online PL learning modules. <https://sunsmart.getlearnworlds.com/courses>.
- Further information and resources are available from the Cancer Council website <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety> and Cancer Council SA website [sunsmart.org.au](https://www.sunsmart.org.au)
- See <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools> for links.
- The Sun Safety Policy will be made available to all educators, staff, families, and visitors of the School to ensure a comprehensive understanding about keeping sun safe including appropriate hat, clothing and sunscreen requirements
- Information about Sun Safety will be included in our Family Handbook and sun protection information and resources made accessible and communicated regularly to families

Related Documents

- Bureau of meteorology. Home page (for UV Index): <http://www.bom.gov.au/uv/>
- Australian Government. Bureau of Meteorology. Severe Weather Warning Services.
- Cancer Council Australia. Be SunSmart. <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart>
- Cancer Council. Home page: [https://www.cancer.org.au/Cancer Council website](https://www.cancer.org.au/Cancer-Council-website)

The School Board reviews this policy at least every 3 years taking into account our context and recognised regulations and standards.

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: / /
SHAUN O' LEARY

Ratified by School Board –

Chairperson's Signature: _____ Date: / /
KATHARINE MITCHELL