

# St. Mary's Catholic School

## Sunsmart Policy 2021

This policy applies to all school events on and off site.

### Rationale

A healthy balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

### Objectives

This SunSmart Policy has been developed to:

- Ensure all students 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 students, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's SunSmart policy.

Staff are encouraged to access the daily SunSmart UV Alert at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) (or on their own school website) to find out daily sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

### From September to April in Victoria

When average UV Index levels reach 3 and above, a combination of sun protection measures are used whenever outdoors including:

#### 1. Shade

- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- The school makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities.
- Shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.

- Students 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 cool, loose fitting and made of densely woven fabric. It includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

#### 3. Hats

- Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket hats, whenever they are outside. Because a baseball cap does not offer enough protection, students wearing a baseball cap will have the same consequences as not wearing a hat.

#### 4. Sunglasses

- Students and staff are encouraged to wear close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

#### 5. Sunscreen

- SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and student's use. [supplied by school and/or families]
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.
- Strategies are in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (e.g. reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies).
- With parental consent, students with naturally very dark skin are not required to wear sunscreen.

### From May to August in Victoria

When average UV Index levels are below 3, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

## Staff OHS and Role modelling

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, when the UV is 3 and above staff:

- wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
- apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible

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

## Curriculum

- Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum for all year levels.
- 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.

## Review

- The school advisory board and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy (at least once every three years) and revise the policy when required.

## Relevant Documents / Links

- Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide: 4.5.11 Skin protection
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
- Education and Training Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools -Government Response
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Sections 21 and 23: Main Duties of Employers Section 25: Duties of Employees
- Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006) ARPANSA Radiation Protection Series No. 12
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight

## Relevant resources

- SunSmart information – includes sample family notes, online membership review, curriculum resources, SunSmart UV Alert widget and iPhone app and information in different languages. [sunsmart.com.au/protecting\\_others/at\\_school/e6\\_p6\\_schools/](http://sunsmart.com.au/protecting_others/at_school/e6_p6_schools/)
- Create your own SunSmart poster: online SunSmart poster templates where children choose the scene, text, upload an image of their own face to place into the scene and print off their very own poster with them as the SunSmart star. There are sun protection, vitamin D and snow posters to choose from [www.sunsmart.com.au/createposter](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/createposter)
- SunSmart Millionaire: How SunSmart are you? An innovative online game-based resource for year 5–7 students that promotes the science behind the SunSmart message. Visit [www.sunsmartmillionaire.com.au/](http://www.sunsmartmillionaire.com.au/)
- SunSmart Countdown: song and associated activities [sunsmart.com.au/protecting\\_others/at\\_school/sunsmart\\_countdown](http://sunsmart.com.au/protecting_others/at_school/sunsmart_countdown)
- Generation SunSmart: fun and interactive online sun protection modules for teachers – assists with professional learning requirements - school nurses and year 6 - 9 students. Visit [generationsunsmart.com.au](http://generationsunsmart.com.au)