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SUN PROTECTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Valkstone Primary School.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to encourage behaviours at Valkstone 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 generally, and in particular between the 1st of September and 30th April - when UV index levels are generally highest in Victoria.
- 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 September – end of April)
- peaks during school hours

Sun safety is a shared responsibility and staff, parents and students are encouraged to implement sun protection measures when outdoors, specifically between 1st September and 30th April.

Valkstone Primary School has the following measures in place to help reduce the risk of excessive UV sun exposure for staff and students. The school will also implement a shortened lunch play timetable on days of extreme heat.

Shade

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

- shade sail clothes over the Prep-2 playground and the area between the MPR and G3 classrooms.
- established trees around the oval and other play areas.

When building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Valkstone 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

Valkstone Primary School's school uniform and dress code includes sun-protective clothing, including:

- 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
- recommend rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities.

From the 1st of September to the 30th April, all students **must** wear a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears for all outdoor activities. Hats may also be worn for all outdoor activities outside of the September to April time period, by parent or student choice.

Students are required to wear a school hat that protects the face, neck and ears when outdoors, for example broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket. 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.

The staff at Valkstone Primary School will act as role models by wearing hats and appropriate clothing.

Sunscreen

Valkstone Primary School encourages all staff and students to apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen daily. Each grade will have a supply of sunscreen for the children to apply.

Valkstone Primary School has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors, such as reminding students to apply before they leave the classroom for recess and lunch, and storing the sunscreen in an accessible place.

Staff and families should role model SunSmart behaviour and are encouraged to apply SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen when outside.

Sunglasses

Where practical Valkstone Primary School allows students engaged in outdoor activities to wear sunglasses.

Curriculum

Students at our school are encouraged to make healthy choices, and are supported to understand the benefits and risks of sun exposure. Valkstone Primary School will address sun and UV safety education as part of the Health Curriculum covered in classrooms.

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

Staff role-modelling and OHS

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

UV radiation exposure is considered as part of our school's risk management and assessment for all outdoor events and activities, i.e. UV radiation protection strategies are included in school camp activities, excursions, sports days and interschool sports events.

Families and visitors

Families and visitors participating in and attending outdoor school activities are encouraged to:

- wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
- apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen; and
- seek shade whenever possible when outdoors.

Community engagement

- Sun protection behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school website/intranet, staff and parent meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and at student enrolment/new staff orientation.

Families, students and staff are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to support UV safety at school and at home. Valkstone Primary School may provide information through communication strategies i.e. newsletters, noticeboards, school website and school assemblies.

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Reminders during staff meetings or via Compass
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Reminders in our school newsletter

[FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES](#)

- Valkstone Primary School Uniform and Dress Code Policy

- the Department’s Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Sun and UV Protection Policy](#)
 - [Heat Health](#)
 - [Outdoor Activities and Working Outdoors](#)
 - [Risk Management – Schools](#)
 - [Shade Sails](#)
 - [Student Dress Code](#)

- [SunSmart and Cancer Council Victoria.](#)
 - [Primary schools free education resources, sample policies and information about the free SunSmart Schools Program.](#)
 - [Sunscreen reactions.](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | 11/9/24 |
| Approved by | School Council |
| Next scheduled review date | February 2027 |