

Sunsmart Policy and Procedures

Rationale

A healthy balance of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before they are 70. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer. Sun protection is needed whenever UV levels reach three and above. In Victoria average UV levels are three and above from September to the end of April. During these months, particular care should be taken between 10am – 3pm when UV levels reach their peak.

This UV policy has been developed to ensure that all students and staff attending Mercy Regional College are protected from over-exposure to the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. This policy documents our sun protection practices in the areas of behavior, curriculum and environment. These practices will be applied to all school activities including sports carnivals, excursions and camps. It is to be implemented throughout Term 1 and Term 4.

Objectives

The administration and staff at Mercy Regional College will endeavour to:

- Ensure that 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.
- Encourage safe UV exposure whenever UV Index levels are high.
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for student's 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 UV radiation policy.

GUIDELINES

Behaviour

- Encourage all students and staff to wear sun protective hats that shade the face, neck and ears during recess, lunchtime and during sporting activities and other high risk activities. Note. During sports classes, baseball caps are worn where a broad brimmed or bucket hat may be impractical. These hats are requirements of the school uniform.
- The summer uniform/dress code includes longer style dresses and shorts which are knee length. The students wear clothing with sleeves and collars that are made from a closely woven fibre and cover the collarbone and shoulders.
- Apply at least SPF 30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen before all outdoor activities and re-apply every two hours. (Staff need to be aware of the use-by date of the sun screen and replace when necessary.)

- Staff will encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outside.
- 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.
- Students who are exposed to high UV levels, without appropriate UV protection (Including sun hat) will be advised by staff to move to areas within the school that provide shelter and shade.

School Organisation

- School Uniform – Include a Sun Smart hat as part of the school uniform.
- Physical Education and Sport Education – All students to be protected from the sun during outdoor physical education and sport classes by wearing a hat and applying sunscreen.
- Where possible, outdoor activities/events will be scheduled to minimise time in direct sun e.g. earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Maximise the use of indoor and shade facilities.
- Camps and Excursions - Suitable hats, clothing and sunscreen should be required for all camps and excursions. These items should be listed on the parent permission form.
- Staff are encouraged to act as role models by using a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when outside.
- 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

- Educational programs on skin cancer prevention and healthy UV exposure for vitamin D are incorporated into appropriate areas of the school curriculum.
- Students are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model appropriate UV exposure measures to the whole school community.
- Appropriate UV exposure measures are regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, staff meetings and school assemblies.

Professional Development

- Appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff handbook to enable staff to work safely outdoors and to encourage them to be positive role models.
- New staff are given a copy of this policy.

Environment

- Ensure there is adequate provision of shade within the school grounds for students and staff.
- In considering future planning and budgeting a shade audit may be required to provide a safe UV environment.

References:

[Sunsmart Widget](#)