

# UV Policy template for Secondary Schools

**Cancer Council Tasmania recognises the importance of promoting healthy sun protection practices through policy development in schools, therefore, has developed this policy to ensure that staff and students are protected against overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR).**

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before the age of 70<sup>i</sup>. Melanoma is the most common cancer in young Australians aged 15 – 29 years<sup>ii</sup>. Over-exposure to UVR causes sunburn, skin damage and increased risk of skin cancer. Skin cancer can be prevented by using a combination of the five sun protection measures during the daily sun protection times such as:



**Slip** on sun protective clothing

**Slop** on SPF 30+ or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen - reapplying every 2 hours.

**Slap** on a broad brimmed hat that shades the face, neck and ears

**Seek** shade

**Slide** on sunglasses.

Being SunSmart in Tasmania means using sun protection when UVR levels reach 3 and above, this occurs from September to April. From May to August, sun protection is not recommended unless near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or working outdoors for extended periods. Therefore, schools need to implement sun protection measures from the beginning of the school year until the end of April and again from the beginning of September until the end of the school year. Implementing sun protection measures throughout Terms 1 and 4 only is insufficient to protect against UVR risks.

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## Why have a UV policy?

Schools, in partnership with families and their communities, can play an important role in reducing skin cancer risk for staff, students and the wider school community, given:

- Sun exposure in childhood and adolescence is an important determinant of melanoma and other skin cancers in later life<sup>iii</sup>.
- School hours fall within peak UVR periods of the day.
- Schools can influence sun protection practices by creating sun safe environments and guiding behaviours through education and role modelling.
- UV policies can be incorporated into existing health and well-being policies.
- Schools have a duty of care to protect students and staff from harm. A UV policy can assist schools to meet this WH&S obligation.

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## How to have a UV policy

1. Create a UV policy by implementing **at least one** criteria from each category within the template below. It is anticipated that schools will work towards achieving all of these criteria over time.
2. Once the relevant criteria have been selected, email your policy for review and completed Contact Details and Agreement form to [sunsmart@cancertas.org.au](mailto:sunsmart@cancertas.org.au).
3. The final tailored policy will be returned to your school for confirmation.
4. Once the above steps have been completed, your school will be awarded membership to the UV Program. Membership is free and lasts for 3 years.

### SunSmart UV Program members are entitled to:

- Welcome/renewal letter
- Certificate of recognition
- Twice-yearly newsletter
- Sunscreen (1 litre when a school joins)
- Free curriculum resources
- Professional development sessions for staff
- Presentations to students
- Templates for school newsletters
- Templates for social media posts
- Support and information

## Selection criteria for UV policy

The following five categories are prevention measures to protect against excessive UVR exposure and need to occur when UVR levels reach 3 and above:

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### Shade

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- Shade is available in areas where students congregate for example, lunch areas, canteen, and outdoor lesson areas.
  - Availability of shade is considered when planning excursions, camps, sport carnivals and all outdoor activities.
  - Students are encouraged to use shade when outside, particularly if they are not wearing appropriate hats or clothing.
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### Hats

Sun protective hats (broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's style hat) are encouraged as a part of the school uniform. During sport classes, caps may be worn where sun protective hats are impractical (in combination with the other sun protection measures). One of the following styles must be available for students to purchase:

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- Broad-brimmed (at least 7cm) hat
  - Bucket style (6cm) hat
  - Legionnaire's style hat
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### Clothing

Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform/dress code and sports uniform in the following ways:

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- The summer uniform/dress code includes a shirt with at least elbow-length sleeves and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
- The summer uniform/dress code includes longer-style skirts/shorts/pants at least to the knee.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes a shirt that covers the shoulders well and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes longer-style skirts/shorts/pants at least to the mid-thigh.
- Rash vests are compulsory for outdoor swimming, when students are waiting to compete.

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## Sunscreen

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students to use.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school.
- Students are encouraged to use and apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and reapply every 2 hours.
- The school community is educated about the correct use of sunscreen and the level of protection it provides (applied 20 minutes before going outside and reapplied every 2 hours).

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## Sunglasses

Close-fitting wrap-around sunglasses that comply with Australian Standards AS1067:2003 (Category 2, 3 or 4) are encouraged for staff and students.

## Selection criteria for UV policy

The following five categories are sun protection measures for the school community:

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### Education

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- Sun-protective behaviour and awareness of skin damage and skin cancer caused by over exposure to UVR is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, staff meetings and school assemblies.
  - Staff members are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote sun protection and healthy UVR balance education across the curriculum.
  - SunSmart secondary school curriculum materials are incorporated into appropriate areas of the curriculum.
  - Students are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures to the whole school community.
  - Families and new staff are informed of the school's UV policy.
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### Role modelling

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- When UVR levels reach 3 and above, staff are expected to role model a combination of sun protection behaviours when outside.
  - The whole school community, including families and visitors, are encouraged to use sun protection measures (sun-protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.
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### Planning

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- The UV policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events and excursions.
- Where possible, outdoor activities from September–April, will be scheduled outside of peak UVR times (when UVR levels reach 3 and above).

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## Staff Work, Health and Safety

From a workplace perspective, secondary schools must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that staff are protected from direct UVR exposure when outdoors during peak UVR periods. Staff members must also take responsibility for their own health and safety by complying and co-operating with reasonable policies or procedures relating to health and safety in the school environment.

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- SunSmart education is included in staff training to enable staff to work safely outdoors and to encourage them to be positive role models.
- Staff members are provided with a copy of the school's UV policy.
- SunSmart information is included in staff handbook/orientation materials.

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## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a hormone that controls calcium levels in the blood. It is needed for healthy bones, muscles and general health. Vitamin D forms when skin is exposed to UV from the sun.

From May to August in Tasmania, average UVR levels are below 3, therefore, sun protection is not recommended during these months unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outdoors for extended periods. UVR levels are more intense in alpine areas such as the snow because there is less atmosphere to absorb UVR. On a clear, sunny day, clean fresh snow can reflect up to 90% of UVR. This means that you can be exposed to UVR directly from the sun and reflected off snow-covered surfaces

*(Select at least one from the category below)*

- Sun protection is not implemented from May to August unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outdoors for extended periods.
- From May to August, staff and students are encouraged to maintain a healthy UVR exposure balance. To generate vitamin D during winter, it is recommended that people be outdoors each day, in the middle of the day, with some skin uncovered. Being physically active while outdoors will further assist with vitamin D levels.
- Due to higher UVR levels in alpine areas, a combination of sun protection measures is used on snow excursions and ski camps.
- Staff who work outdoors (Grounds staff, PE staff etc.) have prolonged periods of sun exposure and therefore it is unlikely that vitamin D deficiency is an issue for this professional group. Those who work outdoors are required to use a combination of sun protection measures throughout the year regardless of UV levels, as they have an increased risk of skin cancer.

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## Relevant documents/links

Department of Education: Sun Protection Policy (Doc ID: TASED-4-5152)

Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission: Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Tasmania

<http://www.cancertas.org.au/prevent-cancer/sunsmart/>

<http://www.cancertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Being-SunSmart-in-Tasmania-flier-FINAL-9-June-2015.pdf>

<http://www.cancertas.org.au/vitamin-d/>

<http://www.generationsunsmart.com.au/>

<http://kidskin.generationsunsmart.com.au/>

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/uv-sun-protection/uv/uv-widget>

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**Date:**

**Review date:**

This information is based on current evidence available at time of review. Last updated: January 2017

**For more information:**

e: [sunsmart@cancertas.org.au](mailto:sunsmart@cancertas.org.au) p: 1300 65 65 85

w: [www.cancertas.org.au/prevent-cancer/sunsmart/](http://www.cancertas.org.au/prevent-cancer/sunsmart/)

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<sup>i</sup> Staples MP, Elwood M, Burton RC, Williams JL, Marks R, Giles GG. Non-melanoma skin cancer in Australia: the 2002 national survey and trends since 1985. *Med J Aust.* 2006;184(1):6-10.

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Cancer in adolescents and young adults in Australia. Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011 Cancer series no. 62. Cat. no. CAN 59

<sup>iii</sup> Whiteman DC, Whiteman CA, Green AC. Childhood sun exposure as a risk factor for melanoma: a systematic review of epidemiologic studies. *Cancer Causes Control.* 2001;12:69–82.