



WEST GREENWOOD PRIMAR
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SUN PROTECTION POLICY

POLICY UPDATE

POLICY	DATE	BY WHOM
Sun Protection	October 2020	Caroline Harben

RATIONALE

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Overexposure to the sun during childhood and adolescence is a contributing factor to the development of skin cancer later in life. As students are at school during times of peak ultraviolet (UV) radiation, schools can play a major role in creating a supportive environment that minimises exposure and encourages sun protective behaviours.

Our Sun Protection Policy has been adopted to ensure that all students and staff attending *West Greenwood Primary School* are protected from skin damage caused by UV radiation from the sun. This policy is to be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis in Term 1 and term 4. The sun protection practices outlined in this policy will be applied to all school activities, including sports carnivals, excursions and camps.

GUIDELINES

West Greenwood Primary School will:

1. Brief all new staff on the Sun Protection Policy.
2. Ensure parents are able to access the policy as needed.
3. Require students to wear broad-brimmed or legionnaire hats when outside.
4. Direct students without a broad-brimmed or legionnaire hat to stay in an area that is protected from the sun, defined as a 'hard structure' eg. verandah or undercover area, but not shade from a tree.
5. Ensure staff wear broad-brimmed or bucket hats for all outdoor activities, including recess and lunch duty in Terms 1 and 4 and strongly encourage them to wear the same in terms 2 and 3.
6. Staff who conduct lessons outdoors on a regular basis (Phys Ed) will be required to wear a broad brimmed hat all year round.
7. Require students to wear broad-brimmed or legionnaire hats and sunscreen for all camps, sport outdoor activities and excursions. These items will be listed on the parent permission form.
8. Encourage students to wear a swim (*rash*) top for swimming (this may not be appropriate during competitive swimming).
9. Ensure there is adequate provision of shade within the school grounds for students and staff, by planting trees and building shade structures.
10. Encourage staff and students to use shaded or covered areas when outside.
11. Ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and outdoor events.
12. Timetable as many outdoor activities as possible - including assemblies, sport and physical education – when the UV index is below 3. When this is not possible activities should be scheduled as far from 12 noon as possible.
13. Encourage the use of SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen by:
 - providing sunscreen in the classroom
 - providing sunscreen in sports classes
- Incorporate sun protection and skin cancer awareness programs into the appropriate Key Learning Areas of the school curriculum.

Our Expectations

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure your child/children has a broad-brimmed or legionnaire hat as per school uniform policy.
- Ensure that your child/children's clothing provides adequate protection from UV radiation.
 - collared school shirt
 - swim (*rash*) tops for swimming.
- Ensure that your child/children has/have access to SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen before leaving for school. Should parents wish to send sunscreen to school for personal use it should be a roll on.
- Act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour.
- Support the school's Sun Protection Policy

Students will:

- Be aware of the school's Sun Protection Policy.
- Take responsibility for their health by being SunSmart.
- Wear suitable hats and a collared school shirt, and apply sunscreen in the morning before attending school.
- Seek additional sunscreen throughout the day if required, from classroom supplies.
- Use shaded or covered areas outdoors.
- Be actively involved in initiatives to protect the school community from over-exposure to the sun.
- Participate in Sun Smart education programs in relevant learning areas and lessons.

Staff will:

- Ensure all students without appropriate hats are directed to the correct areas for breaks.
- Ensure students are aware of where they can access additional sun screen in classrooms.
- Be alert of student behaviour in relation to sun smart practices, whilst outdoors, at camps and excursions. eg. regularly remind students about shade and sunscreen.
- Liaise with parents if students consistently fail to wear appropriate sun smart clothing.

APPENDICES

1. Cancer Council WA – Best Practice Guidelines for WA Schools

SUN PROTECTION.

Best practice guidelines for Western Australian schools

Background

This document outlines why evidence-based sun protection should be included in the policy and practice of all Western Australian schools. It also provides key recommendations on how to reduce exposure to harmful ultraviolet radiation to students and staff. This document applies to pre-compulsory schooling, primary and secondary schools.

Preventing Skin Cancer

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three people developing skin cancer at some time in their lives.¹ Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun has been identified as the cause of approximately 99% of non-melanoma skin cancers, and 95% of melanomas in Australia.^{2,3}

Research has established that childhood and adolescence are both critical periods during which sun exposure could contribute to skin cancer later in life. It is estimated that more than 75% of all skin cancers could be prevented by practising sun protective behaviours in childhood and adolescence.⁴ Given the amount of time spent in schools, it is critical that adequate protection is provided during this time. In addition to the protection schools can offer from exposure to UV, the school setting provides a valuable opportunity to influence positive behaviours and establish the use of daily life long sun protection practices.

Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation

UV radiation damages the DNA in skin cells. Damage to the skin can result in premature ageing and increases the risk of developing skin cancer. UV levels peak in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. UV radiation cannot be seen or felt and is different to infra-red radiation (heat), therefore UV levels are not directly related to temperature.

The UV Index

The UV Index indicates the strength of UV radiation reaching the ground. A UV level of 3 is high enough to cause damage to unprotected skin, therefore it is important to protect skin when the UV level is 3 and above. The higher the UV Index value, the greater the potential for skin damage. See Figure 1, below.



Figure 1 Source: World Health Organization (2002) *Global UV Index: A practical guide*

The UV forecast (not the temperature) should be used as the guide when assessing whether sun protection is required for outdoor activities. Your local UV forecast will give you the day's maximum UV strength and sun protection times (the period when UV will be 3 or higher). The UV forecast is available through the SunSmart app, the Bureau of Meteorology website, or at myuv.com.au.

In Western Australia the UV radiation levels are 3 and above for the majority of the year. Schools that do not require sun protection to be used for the whole of terms 2 and 3 are putting their students at risk of skin damage. For areas north of Perth, the UV Index will usually exceed 3 at midday every day of the year. Schools in this region should require students and staff to adhere to sun protection policies all year. Areas south of Perth can experience midday UV readings of less than 3 in June and July. It is acceptable to go without sun protection on days when the UV Index is below 3.

Duty of Care

Duty of care is a legal duty to take reasonable care to minimise the risk of foreseeable harm to students. UV radiation is listed as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organization. Group 1 carcinogens are proven to cause cancer in humans. Skin damage may occur without any sign of sunburn. Any activity that involves students being outdoors for any period of time should be seen as potentially placing them at risk of sunburn and other skin damage, and subsequent skin cancer. In other words, a school has a duty of care to implement sun protection policies and practices.

Workplace Health and Safety

Exposure to UV radiation is an occupational hazard for people who spend all or part of their working day outside. Health and safety legislation in each Australian state requires employers to provide a safe working environment. This legislation also states that employees must cooperate with a workplace's sun protection requirements.

Vitamin D

Some sun exposure is necessary for vitamin D production. The majority of Australians achieve adequate vitamin D levels through the sun exposure they receive incidentally during typical day-to-day outdoor activities. Extended or deliberate sun exposure without any form of sun protection when the UV Index is 3 or above for the purpose of increasing vitamin D levels is not recommended. For further details see the Cancer Council position statement here cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/sunsmart-position-statements.html.

Effective sun protection in schools

Schools are encouraged to approach sun protection in an integrated and comprehensive way with links between policy, curriculum, and environment.

Policy

It is recommended that all schools have a comprehensive sun protection policy that is implemented when the UV level is 3 and above and that the policy covers the areas of:

- Curriculum
- The environment (e.g. shade)
- Skin protection (e.g. clothing, broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's hats, sunscreen)
- Scheduling of outdoor activities to minimise exposure during peak UV radiation times

Schools are encouraged to contact Cancer Council WA or access SunSmart template policies when establishing a local sun protection policy.

Recommended sun protection strategies

Cancer Council WA recommends that schools employ as many of the measures below as possible whenever students and staff are outside while the UV Index is 3 or higher.



Uniforms, clothing and hats

- All staff and students wear a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat that protects the face, neck, ears and crown of the head when outside. Caps are not sun protective and should not be permitted.
- Spare hats should be available for students to ensure their play time is not restricted if they forget their hat, or students without hats should be encouraged to play in the shade.
- Sun protective clothing is required in the school uniform/dress code (i.e. collared shirts, elbow or full length sleeves, longer shorts, skirts or long pants), including sports uniforms. Fabric with a UPF rating of 50+ is chosen where possible.
- Staff and students wear a rashie or similar top for swimming/water activities (may not be appropriate for competitive swimming).
- Adults wear appropriate sunglasses and students have the option to wear them.

Shade

- The school has sufficient shade or is working towards increasing shade (natural or built) in the school grounds, especially in areas where students congregate at break time.
- The use of shade (including temporary shade) is maximised during outdoor activities and indoor facilities are used wherever possible.

Scheduling

- When outdoor activities are scheduled at times when the UV Index is 3 or higher, maximum use is made of shade, sunscreen, hats and long clothing to protect students and staff.
- Where possible, outdoor activities are scheduled out of peak UV times.

Sunscreen

- Sunscreen is available and accessible to all staff and students.
- The use of SPF30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is required before outdoor activities, recess and lunch. Time is given to apply sunscreen and reapplication after 2 hours is encouraged during extended outdoor periods.

Other recommendations

- Positive role modelling of sun protection behaviour is demonstrated by all school staff, parents and visitors.
- Include lessons on skin cancer prevention in the curriculum.
- Physical activity and play in conjunction with sun protection policies is promoted. 'No hat, no play' policies are counter-productive for physical activity. 'No hat, play in the shade' is a preferable approach.

More information

Contact Cancer Council WA on **08 9212 4333** or email sunsmart@cancerwa.asn.au.

Information and educational resources specifically designed for teachers, school health nurses and school administrators can be found at generationsunsmart.com.au.

For information, facts and support on skin cancer or other cancer issues call Cancer Council WA on **13 11 20**.