

Sun Protection/UV Policy

Our Commitment

Firbank Grammar School is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff. This policy has been developed to ensure that all students and staff maintain a healthy UV exposure balance which minimises the risk of skin cancer with appropriate sun protection measures, yet ensures some daily sun exposure for vitamin D requirements.

Objectives

The Sun Protection/UV Policy has been developed to;

- Assist the Firbank School community to achieve a healthy UV balance
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV level reach 3 and above

Implementation

This policy documents the School's sun protection practices in the areas of behaviour, curriculum and environment. These practices will be applied to all School activities including sports carnivals, excursions and camps and any outdoor activities and sport programs. It is to be implemented throughout the year but with particular emphasis during Terms 1 and 4.

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 extra care is needed between 10am – 3pm when UV levels reach the peak.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D regulates calcium levels in the blood. It is also necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, muscles and teeth and for general health.

From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three so sun protection isn't usually needed during these months unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

From May to August in Victoria When average UV Index levels are below 3:

To help maintain winter vitamin D levels, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above. Sun protection measures are only required when in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

Sun Protection/UV Policy

From September to April in Victoria When average UV Index levels reaches 3 and above:

Shade

- The School ensures shade is available in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate
- The School ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds
- Processes for the planning of outdoor activities and excursions include the consideration of shade
- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade
- Students are encouraged to use shade when outside
- The School will continue to work towards increasing and maintaining shaded areas for staff and students. This will include co-ordinating planning and planting of trees to provide shaded areas and the investigation of increasing shaded areas with sails and umbrellas
- When shade is not available, temporary shade structures will be considered for events such as sports and house carnivals

Clothing, hats and sunglasses

Sun protective clothing is included in Firbank's school and sports uniform;

- Summer uniform includes a dress with sleeves and a collar
- Summer uniform includes longer style dress at least to the knees
- The sport uniform includes a shirt that covers the shoulders well and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone
- The sports uniform includes longer style skirts/shorts to at least mid-thigh
- Students and staff are encouraged to wear hats that protect their face whenever they are outside. During sports classes, baseball caps are worn when a broad brimmed or bucket hat may be impractical.
- Students and staff are encouraged to wear sunglasses that meet the Australian Standards 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible
- Suitable hats, clothing and sunscreen will be required for all camps and excursions

Sunscreen

SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students' use and students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen to school. Staff are to encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outside. Sunscreen is located at various points around the school eg. Early Learning Centres, Sports facilities, Cafeteria, Reception and Staff Rooms.

Physical Education and Sport (Including After School Sport)

Whilst in the sun, and at times of high UV exposure, all students are to wear the School PE hat or the School legionnaires/bucket hat for Junior School and Early Learning Centre. This is a compulsory item and the wearing of it will be enforced during Terms 1 and 4.

Sun Protection/UV Policy

The Physical Education faculty will have spare hats to ensure that all students are adequately protected whilst exposed to the sun. Where appropriate, students should wear, and be encouraged to wear, sunglasses. For outdoor swimming carnivals and events, students are encouraged to wear a t-shirt or rash vest.

Junior Schools and Early Learning Centres

During Terms 1 and 4, all Junior School and Early Learning students are required to wear a School approved hat during recess and lunch. It is the responsibility of the students to have their hats each day. A “No Hat, No Play” rule will be enforced.

Scheduling

This policy is considered in the planning of all outdoor events such as assemblies, classes, camps, excursions and sporting events. 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. Shaded and indoor venues will be considered.

Staff H&S and Role modelling

As part of H&S UV risk controls and role modelling, staff are encouraged to use 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.

General Awareness

Firbank actively promotes a positive culture around sun protection. Senior School students and staff are provided with sun protection times and a UV alert each day via the School Bulletin. The SunSmart web widget is available to all students and staff.

Professional Development for Staff

Appropriate UV exposure measures are included in staff training to enable staff to work safely outdoors and to encourage them to be positive role models.

Policy Review

The School Health and Safety Committee and School Leadership Team will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Sun Protection Policy and will revise the policy when required. This policy is available on the School website.