SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the school office on 9870 3050 or ringwood.heights.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support sun protection behaviours at Ringwood Heights Primary School to minimise risk of health problems from sun overexposure, including skin cancer.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV index levels are 3 or above (generally mid-August to the end of April 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 on and off-site, including camps and excursions. It is applicable to all students and staff.

POLICY

Overexposure 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 damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

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 day and the year (highest from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria)
- peaks during school hours.

Sun safety is a shared responsibility and staff, parents and students are encouraged to implement a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 or above. Information about the daily local sun protection times is available via the free SunSmart app, or at sunsmart.com.au or bom.gov.au.

Ringwood Heights Primary School has the following measures in place for all outdoor activities during the daily sun protection times to help reduce the risk of over-exposure to UV radiation for staff and students.

Shade

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

- lunch eating spaces (decks – staff to monitor available shade and adjust mid-August-end of April)
- passive play areas (arena, tiny top)
- active play areas (big top)
- playgrounds (prep playground)

Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outdoors during peak sun protection times, particularly if they do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing.

When building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Ringwood Heights Primary School that may impact on the level of shade 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

Ringwood Heights Primary School's uniform includes sun-protective clothing, including:

- loose, cool, densely woven fabric
- shirts with a collar and/or high necklines
- the option of tops with long sleeves

Ringwood Heights Primary School's uniform applies on and off-site unless otherwise advised. When students are not required to wear school uniform (such as school camps, free dress day), Ringwood Heights Primary School will ensure steps are taken to encourage students to wear sun-protective clothing whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.

Hats

From mid-August (exact date to be set by the school annually) to late April, all students **must** wear a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears for all outdoor activities. Families will be notified and reminded about hats at school assemblies and in newsletters. Hats may also be worn for all outdoor activities outside of the August to April time period, by parent or student choice.

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

Baseball or peaked caps and sun visors are not considered a suitable alternative, as they do not protect the ears, cheeks or neck.

Students who are not wearing appropriate protective clothing or hats will be asked to use available areas of shade when outdoors or a suitable area protected from the sun.

Sunscreen

Ringwood Heights Primary School encourages all staff and students to apply SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen daily whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Sunscreen should be applied before school and re-applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors (every two hours).

Students and staff are reminded and encouraged to bring their own SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to school.

Ringwood Heights Primary School has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors. Families are encouraged to work with classroom teachers if students require further reminders developing independent sun protection (self-care) routines.

Sunglasses

Where practical, Ringwood Heights Primary School encourages students and staff engaged in outdoor activities 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.

Curriculum

Students at our school are encouraged to make healthy choices. They are supported to understand effects of sun exposure and are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures to the whole school. Ringwood Heights Primary School will address sun protection and UV safety education during Wellbeing learning units in Term 1 annually.

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 SPF50 or SPF50+ 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, staff meetings and school assemblies.

Families, students and staff are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to support UV safety at school and at home. Ringwood Heights Primary School may provide information through reminders at school assemblies and in learning team/school newsletters.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Referred to in school and learning team newsletters
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- 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.
  - Secondary schools free education resources and sample policies.
  - Sunscreen reactions.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June, 2025
Approved by	School Council September, 2025
Next scheduled review date	August, 2028