



St Mary's College

Sun Protection Policy Guidelines

Rationale

The College recognises the importance of promoting healthy sun protection practices and has therefore developed this policy to ensure that the College community is protected against over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

This policy aims to ensure students and staff maintain a healthy UV balance all year round and encourages both sun protection when UV Index levels reach 3 and above, and safe sun exposure for vitamin D production, which is vital for the maintenance of healthy bones, teeth and general good health.

The Hazard - Sun Exposure

Over- exposure to UV from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Skin cancers account for 80% of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia each year and Melanoma is the most diagnosed cancer for those aged between 15 and 44.

In Tasmania, the UV is generally 3 and above from September to April. Therefore, the recommendation from the Cancer Council of Tasmania is that sun protection measures should be implemented 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. However, it is recognised that in practice sun protection measures, such as the wearing of hats, are most practically enforced in Terms 1 and 4.

Policy Framework

St Mary's College is committed to providing a safe working environment for all our students, workers and visitors. It is our policy to:

- increase student and community awareness about skin cancer and sun protection
- encourage the entire College community to use a combination of sun protection measures
- work towards a safe college environment that provides shade for students, staff and the College community
- assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection
- ensure that families and new staff are informed of this policy
- support student duty of care requirements
- support appropriate workplace safety strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for staff and visitors.



Sun Protection Strategies

St Mary's College has developed the following sun protection strategies which are observed during terms 1 and 4:

1. General

Staff and or students check the daily local sun protection times. The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day that UV levels are forecast to reach three or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types.

All students and staff use a combination of sun protection measures throughout the day whenever UV levels are three or above to ensure they are well protected at the appropriate times.

UV levels are typically 3 and above from September to April.

Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the year, provided appropriate sun protection measures are used when UV is 3 and above.

2. Clothing

Sun-safe clothing is part of our school and sports uniforms. This includes shirts with collars, sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or T-shirts for outdoor swimming.

Clothing exposing large amounts of shoulder and upper torso e.g. singlets, tank tops and strappy dresses are not considered suitable.

3. Hats

Students are required to wear the school uniform approved hats that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside.

Baseball caps are not permitted as they do not offer enough protection and are not part of the College uniform. Students who do not have an appropriate sun protective hat will be asked to stay in shaded areas only.

4. Shade

The College is committed to providing shade in areas where students gather such as for eating, outdoor teaching and commonly used play areas where practicable.

Students are actively encouraged to use available areas of shade when outdoors.

Shade audits should be conducted regularly to determine the availability and quality of shade.



Availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities, particularly water activities.

5. Sunscreen

The use of broad-spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30 or higher sunscreen is encouraged whenever the UV index is predicted to be above 3. Students are encouraged to provide and apply their own sunscreen.

For outdoor events and excursions, where the UV index is predicted to be above 3, in alpine regions or near highly reflective surfaces such as water and snow, the use of broad-spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30 or higher sunscreen is required where students and staff will be outdoors for extended periods of time.

When used, sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every 2 hours if outdoors for extended periods.

6. Sunglasses

Close-fitting wrap-around sunglasses which comply with Australian Standards AS1067:2003 (Category 2, 3 or 4) are encouraged but optional.

7. Role Modelling

When UV is 3 and above staff shall role model sun protection behaviours when outside by using the combination of sun protection measures outlined above.

Families and visitors are to be encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D requirements are to be included in teaching programs for all year levels

Sun safe behaviour is to be regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, meetings, assemblies and upon enrolment.

8. Scheduling and Planning

Sun protection policy shall be reflected in the planning of all outdoor events and excursions.

Where possible, outdoor activities shall not be planned for the middle of the day during the period September to end April (when UV levels reach 3 and above).

Responsibility

All staff must follow the guidelines as set out in this policy.



Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff and student training and awareness of issues relating to skin and safe sun exposure
- implementation of sun protection measures
- effective notification procedures
- effective communication procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy St Mary's College may take disciplinary action.

Review

St Mary's College is committed to the continuous review and improvement of all its operations, including this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Sun Protection Policy to ensure it is working in practice and revise the policy when required.

External Resources

[SunSmart](#)

[Cancer](#)

[Council](#)

[UV and Sun Protection Times](#)

[ARPANSA: Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet](#)

[Radiation Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\) Australian regulatory guidelines](#)

[for sunscreens](#) [Generation SunSmart – free online training modules for staff and](#)

[senior students](#)