



# SUN PROTECTION POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gembrook Primary School Office.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support sun protection behaviours at Gembrook 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 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 where 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](http://sunsmart.com.au) or [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au).

Gembrook 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

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

- Circle of Harmony
- Canteen area
- Outdoor lesson areas
- Basketball seating area
- Assembly areas

Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outdoors during peak sun protection times. Students without hats must play under the covered area adjacent to the Circle of Harmony area.

When building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Gembrook 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 where appropriate.

## Sun protective uniform/clothing

Gembrook Primary School recommends that from mid-August to end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, staff and students come to school wearing sun-protective clothing such as:

- loose, cool, densely woven fabric
- shirts with a collar and/or high necklines
- tops with elbow length or long sleeves
- longer style shorts, dresses and skirts
- rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities.

Gembrook Primary School student uniform options includes sun-protective clothing, including:

- loose, cool, densely woven fabric
- shirts with a collar and/or high necklines
- tops with elbow length or long sleeves
- longer style shorts, dresses and skirts

Gembrook Primary School uniform or dress code applies on and off-site unless otherwise advised. When students are not required to wear school uniform (such as school camps, free dress day), Gembrook 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 30 April, all students **must** wear a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck, and ears for all outdoor activities. Hats may also be worn for all outdoor activities outside of the August to April time period, by parent or student choice.

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 remain in a suitable area protected from the sun.

## Sunscreen

Gembrook Primary School encourages all staff and students to apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen daily whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours (or more frequently if sweating or swimming). Students are encouraged to apply sunscreen prior to coming to school if the UV forecast is to reach 3 or above.

Gembrook Primary School has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors for example, reminders by staff before each playtime and reminder notices in the newsletter.

Gembrook Primary School does not supply sunscreen for staff and students. Sunscreen is available for P.E. from the gym and the sick bay if a staff member or student has run out of their own sunscreen. Sunscreen that is supplied by the school is stored below 30 degrees and the expiry date is monitored.

## 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. Gembrook Primary School will address sun protection and UV safety education as part of the Health and Physical Education program.

## 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 SPF30 (or higher) 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, school website/intranet, staff and parent meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and at student enrolment/new staff orientation.

Families, students, and staff are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to support UV safety at school and at home. Gembrook Primary School may provide information through communication strategies i.e. newsletters, noticeboards, school website, and school assemblies.

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website.
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Included in our staff handbook/manual.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter.
- Discussed at student forums through communication tools.
- Made available in hard copy 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	March 2024
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	March 2027