



O'Connor Cooperative School

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Policy and Procedure: UV Protection

Policy statement

This policy is considered before participating in all outdoor activities and events on and off site. A combination of sun protection measures will be required when ultraviolet radiation (UV) levels reach 3 and above. In Canberra this will be for most or part of each day between August and May. Staff at O'Connor Cooperative School have a duty of care to ensure that sun protection is provided for students at school. There is a shared responsibility between the school and parents/carers which must be acknowledged and accepted. Staff are expected to provide their own sun protection and act as a role model for students.

Rationale

It is important to have a healthy balance of UV exposure. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. However, too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

Objectives

This UV Protection policy has been developed to:

- ensure all students and staff have a balanced approach to sun protection;
- require all students and staff to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above;
- work towards a safe outdoor environment that provides effective shade for students and workers at appropriate times;
- assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection behaviour, and ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's current policy and practices around UV protection.

All staff are encouraged to access the daily SunSmart UV Alert for Canberra to find out local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

Students and staff will be required to use a combination of the below sun protection measures for all outdoor activities and events whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, the level that can cause long term damage to unprotected skin.

In the ACT the following rule applies:

End of May is Hats Off day!

Beginning of August is Hats On again for all of us!

1. Shade

Our school board and members ensure:

- there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the outdoor area;
- the availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities and events;
- students are encouraged and directed to use available areas of shade when outside, especially during Term 1 and 4; and

- students who do not wear an appropriate hat or clothing are directed to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

2. Clothing

Students and staff are required to wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric is recommended. Tops with sleeves (longer the better), collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best. Students are required to wear a t-shirt or rash style vest if participating in all day outdoor swimming carnivals, and the school uniform/dress code, including sports and Physical Education incorporates UV protection elements.

3. Hats

All students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears from UV, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hat with a deep crown. Baseball or peak caps are not considered a suitable alternative and will not be worn.

4. Sunglasses (suggested)

Students who choose to wear sunglasses will be encouraged and supported. A close fitting, wrap-around pair of sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) that covers as much of the eye area as possible is best; and staff are encouraged to wear suitable sunglasses when working outdoors that meet AS 1067.

5. Sunscreen

The school makes SPF 30 or higher, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen accessible to all students and staff daily in the front office. Parents are reminded to send their child/ren to school with sunscreen already applied. Students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen that they may choose to apply during the day. Strategies are in place for staff members to effectively remind/create opportunities for students to apply sunscreen, if they choose, before going outdoors

Sunscreen will be available at all outdoor events eg. Swimming and Athletic Carnivals, camps and excursions etc.

Children with naturally very dark skin (skin that rarely or never burns) may not be required to wear sunscreen to assist with their vitamin D requirements.

6. Outdoor activities

Outdoor time will be minimised, when possible and practical, between 11am and 3pm during the daylight saving/summer period (i.e. Terms 1 and 4). This is when UV levels peak in Canberra and the risk of skin and eye damage is significantly increased. Care is always taken during the middle of the day when outdoors.

7. Winter and sun protection

Due to low UV levels experienced in Canberra around the June and July period each day (under 3), sun protection behaviour, such as wearing a hat and applying sunscreen is not generally recommended. Students and staff will not be required to wear their sun hat during this period- this may be replaced with a beanie. Staff are encouraged to educate students during this period around the importance of a balanced approach to sun protection- i.e. students should know when sun protection is necessary and why.

8. Work Health and Safety & Modelling

As part of our school's Work Health and Safety (WHS) responsibilities and duty of care, all staff will be required to protect their skin and eyes when working outdoors. When UV levels are 3 and above or if spending extended time in the sun a combination of sun protection measures will be required.

Between August and May staff at our school will be encouraged to:

- wear sun protective hats and clothing; apply SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and reapply every 2 hours;

- seek shade whenever possible, and be aware of the signs of early skin cancer and what to do if they have any concerns.

Sunglasses should be worn all year round regardless of UV levels when working outdoors. A close fitting, wrap-around pair offers the best protection.

The school leadership team will do as much of what is considered "reasonably practicable" to protect staff at our school from over-exposure to solar UV radiation. Skin cancer is an occupational disease.

Families and visitors to our school are encouraged to model appropriate sun protection behaviour by adopting a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when participating in and attending outdoor activities and events on site between August and May.

9. Communication and Learning Outcomes

Our school will:

- display this UV Protection policy for parents /carers, and discuss it with the students;
- regularly reinforce SunSmart behaviour through correspondence with families and through student and staff activities and learning experiences.

10. Review, monitor and update

Our policy is regularly monitored and reviewed (at least once every three years) and revised when required.

As a member of the National SunSmart Schools Program, this policy will be submitted to Cancer Council ACT every three (3) years to be reviewed.

11. Relevant Documents / Links

Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006) ARPANSA

Radiation Protection Series No. 12

Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

ACT Education and Training Directorate Sun Protection Policy 2006

Cancer Council ACT National SunSmart Schools Program