

POLICY STATEMENT

Yarrowonga College P-12 is committed to ensuring that all students and staff have a healthy UV exposure balance to help with vitamin D and are protected from over-exposure to the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. Sun exposure has been identified as the cause of around 99% of non-melanoma skin cancers and 95% of melanoma in Australia. Each year, Australians are four times more likely to develop a common skin cancer than any other form of cancer.

Yarrowonga College P-12 will ensure that our sun protection practices are applied to all school activities from mid-August until April 30th each year or whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support sun protection behaviours at Yarrowonga College P-12 to minimise risk of health problems from sun overexposure. We aim to increase student and whole school awareness of skin cancer and to minimize the risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- Assist students and staff to develop strategies that encourage responsible decision-making about skin protection.
- Ensure students are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills to help them to be responsible for their own protection
- To work towards a safe school environment that provides adequate shade for all members of the school community.
- To encourage all members of the school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
- To ensure that parents and new staff are informed of the school's SunSmart policy.
- To ensure all students and staff have some UV exposure for vitamin D
- 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.

Staff and students are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times at [sunsmart.com.au](https://www.sunsmart.com.au) or on the free SunSmart App to assist with the implementation of this policy.

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 and above (typically from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria). Information about the daily local sun protection times is available via the SunSmart widget on the school's website, the free SunSmart app, or at sunsmart.com.au or bom.gov.au.

Yarrowonga College P-12 has the following measures in place to help reduce the risk of excessive UV sun exposure for staff and students. A combination of sun protection measures are used for all outdoor activities from **mid August to the end of April** and whenever **UV levels reach 3 and above**.

Shade

Yarrowonga College P-12 will provide sufficient options for shelter and trees to provide shade on school grounds, particularly in places such as:

- where students congregate for lunch
- the canteen
- outdoor lesson areas
- popular play areas
- assembly areas
- community sporting grounds/pools.

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.

All assemblies will be held in shade whenever possible and outdoor activities (particularly PE & Sport) will maximise the use of indoor and shade areas where possible.

When building works or grounds maintenance is conducted at Yarrowonga College P-12 that may impact on the level of shading available to staff and students, a review of the shaded areas available will be conducted and further shading installed as appropriate.

Uniform

- The summer uniform includes a shirt with at least elbow length sleeves and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone; as well as longer style shorts and dresses.
- The sports uniform includes a shirt with at least elbow length sleeves and a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone, as well as longer style sports shorts.
- Rash vests or t-shirts are required for outdoor swimming activities.

Yarrowonga College P-12'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), the College will ensure steps are taken to encourage students to wear sun-protective clothing whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. Suitable hats, clothing and sunscreen are required for all camps and excursions and this is clearly stated on permission forms.

Hats

- Staff and students are required to wear a bucket style hat (students) or a hat of their choice (staff) that shades the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside from mid August until April 30th and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- 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 use available areas of shade when outdoors or a suitable area protected from the sun.

Sunscreen

- SPF 30+ or higher broad spectrum sunscreen is available for staff and student use. This is available in the Physical Education / Sport area, the Sick Bay and at each Campus Office.
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes (where possible) before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.
- Strategies are in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors (e.g. reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies).
- Students who may suffer from skin reactions from certain types of sunscreen are encouraged to contact the school to implement a plan to reduce the risk of a sunscreen reaction at school, such as families sending their child to school with a suitable alternative sunscreen.
- *With parental consent, students with naturally very dark skin are not required to wear sunscreen to help with vitamin D requirements.*

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. Educational programs on skin cancer prevention and maintaining vitamin D levels are incorporated into Health lessons and other appropriate areas of the school curriculum.

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. Staff are to model appropriate sun smart practices when outside (sun protective clothing & hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade).

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.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- the Department of Education'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	July 2023
Approved by	School Council on 22 August 2023
Next scheduled review date	July 2027