MERINO CONOLIDATED SCHOOL

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 55 791305.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support sun protection behaviours at Merino Consolidated School to minimise the 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, which covers most of the school year)
- 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 SunSmart widget on the school's website, the free SunSmart Global UV app, or at sunsmart.com.au, or at the Bureau of Meteorology at bom.gov.au.

Merino Consolidated 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

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

- where students congregate for lunch
- outdoor lesson areas
- popular play areas
- sporting grounds

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 Merino Consolidated 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

Merino Consolidated School recommends that from mid-August to end of April, and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, 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.

Merino Consolidated School ’s uniform or dress code 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
- rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming activities.

Merino Consolidated School 's 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), Merino Consolidated 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 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.

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

Merino Consolidated 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 at least 20 minutes before going outdoors, and reapplied every 2 hours (or more frequently if sweating or swimming).

Merino Consolidated School supplies SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students to use and the location is communicated to all staff and students, so it is readily accessible.

Merino Consolidated School has strategies in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors, sunscreen stations near entry and exit points.

Sunscreen that is supplied by the school is stored below 30 degrees and the expiry date monitored.

Staff and students who may suffer from skin reactions from certain types of sunscreen are encouraged to contact the principal 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.

Sunglasses

Where practical, Merino Consolidated 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.

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 may practice and

role-model these behaviours even when the UV is below 3, particularly if they spend extended periods of time outdoors all year round.

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, school website/intranet, staff and parent meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and at student enrolment/new staff orientation.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- 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.

- The Healthy Schools Achievement Program's Sun Protection health priority area

- ## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2026
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	February 2030