

Northam Primary School

Background

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun. UV damage begins to accumulate during childhood and adolescence and is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life. As students and staff are at school during times of peak UV radiation, schools play a major role in providing an environment that minimises exposure and encourages long-term sun protective behaviours.

Aim

Our Sun Protection Policy has been developed to ensure that all students, staff, parents and visitors attending Northam Primary School are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Implementation

This policy is to be implemented when the forecast average monthly UV Index in our area is 3 or above (available from www.bom.gov.au). Throughout Western Australia, UV levels reach 3 or above during all school terms. The sun protection practices outlined in this policy will be applied to all school activities, including sports carnivals, excursions and camps. Provisions will be made for students who do not have adequate sun protective clothing or hats and these students will not be excluded from play or physical activity, though activities may be restricted to shaded areas.

Procedures

Scheduling outdoor activities

- Where possible, we schedule outdoor activities such as assemblies, outdoor lessons, sport and physical education to occur when the UV Index is below 3. When this is not possible activities are scheduled as far from 12 noon as possible to avoid peak UV times.
- When outdoor activities are scheduled at times when the UV Index is 3 or higher, maximum use is made of shade, sunscreen, hats and long clothing to protect students and staff.
- We require students, staff and parent helpers to wear a broad-brimmed school hat, sun protective clothing and sunscreen for all camps, sports and excursions. These items are listed on the parent permission form.
- Parents are reminded to pack additional sunscreen for their children for outdoor events such as Carnival days, Cross Country events, and Lap-a-thons.

Shade

- We ensure there is adequate provision of shade within the school grounds for students and staff, particularly in areas in high use areas, for example, popular play areas, where children eat lunch, canteen, and outdoor lesson areas.
- We encourage staff and students to use shaded areas when outside.
- Students who do not have appropriate hats or sun protective clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- We ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and outdoor events.
- Shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings, grounds and playground equipment.

Hats

- We require students and staff to wear the broad-brimmed school hat that protects the face, neck, ears and crown of the head whenever they are outside.
- Students without hats will remain protected from the sun through the No School Hat, No outdoor Play rule. They will be required to play in the shaded undercover areas.
- We encourage parents and visitors to wear broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaires style hats when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

Clothing

- Cool, loose-fitting sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. It includes shirts with collars, dresses and skorts/shorts.
- Staff and students are required to wear a rash vest or similar top for swimming/water activities (may not be appropriate for short periods of competitive swimming).
- School will provide the school gardener sun smart uniform with long sleeves and long pants, as well as a broad brimmed hat and sunscreen.

Sunscreen

- Sunscreen is available and accessible to staff and students in classrooms and around the school grounds e.g. at the school office or canteen. Sunscreen is listed as an item students are required to buy for the school year.
- All students and staff will be encouraged to apply SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors e.g. prior to school, before lunch, PE lessons, sports, excursions etc.
- Sunscreen is on the Pupil Requirements List each year for parents to supply student personal sunscreen.
- Staff will ensure that students are given the opportunity to reapply sunscreen before every break or outside lesson.
- Sunscreen will be stored in a cool place, out of the sun.
- The occupational safety and health representative will monitor the expiry date of sunscreen and discard when out of date.

Extreme Weather

- The extreme weather policy will be followed when UV index is rated high or very high or if the weather is classified as a heatwave (sustained heat over a few days). All students will be kept inside classrooms during breaks.

Role modelling and occupational health and safety

- To support health and safety legislation, staff are required to wear sun protective hats when supervising students.
- Staff, students and visitors will act as positive role models and demonstrate SunSmart behaviour when attending school by:
 - wearing sun protective clothing
 - applying SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water resistant sunscreen
 - wearing a sun protective hat (broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaires style)
 - using and promoting shade

Education

- Programs on sun protection are included in the curriculum for all year levels.

Informing the school community

- Sun protection is communicated to staff, families and visitors via newsletters, social media, assemblies, whole school activities, and parent and staff meetings.
- Families and visitors are encouraged to role model sun protection measures when attending outdoor activities.

Policy monitoring and review

- The sun protection policy will be made available to staff and parents. Parents are informed of this sun protection policy when they enrol their child/children. All new employees are briefed on the sun protection policy.
- The policy is monitored regularly and reviewed every three years.

Date for review: August 2027.

