

Sample sun protection policy for primary, intermediate schools & kura



This SunSmart policy provides guidelines to ensure that students, staff and the school community are protected from damaging levels of ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun while engaged in school activities.

Hoatu ai te kaupapahere SunSmart i etahi aratohu hei whakarite kei te noho marumaru ngā ākonga, ngā kaimahi me te hapori kura i ngā hihī o te rā i a ratou e whakauru ana ki ngā mahi kura.

Rationale

Too much of the Sun's UVR can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and lead to skin cancer, the most common cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand. Childhood and adolescence are critical periods during which accumulated UVR exposure can be an important risk factor for skin cancer development later in life. Young people spend long periods of time at school during the hours of peak UVR and their exposure can be higher on school days than during the weekend.

School settings provide an ideal sun protection opportunity for tamariki, staff and the school community, through the implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive SunSmart policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on ways schools can minimise UVR exposure and provide a supportive SunSmart environment. Schools can also provide excellent learning opportunities to encourage good life-long sun protection practices.

Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. More than 90 percent of skin cancers could be prevented by reducing exposure to UVR.

Guidance

Sun protection should be used whenever ultraviolet index (UVI)¹ levels are 3 or higher. For most parts of New Zealand this is between September and April, especially between 10am and 4pm. To check the UVI levels in your area, download the free UVNZ app from your App store. **UVR levels can still be high on cool or cloudy days, so temperature is not a good indicator for deciding when to use sun protection.** Use sun protection throughout the year when at high altitudes (in the mountains) or near reflective surfaces such as water and snow.

- Outdoor activities are encouraged year-round (with sun protection when UVI levels 3 or higher), because of broader health benefits, including Vitamin D production.
- Children with a health condition or taking medicines, (such as antibiotics), that make them sensitive to the Sun, should use sun protection year-round. This includes children with autoimmune diseases or medical conditions that weaken the immune system, as well as organ transplant recipients.
- This policy should apply to students, staff, family members, whānau and visitors, on-site at school and during excursions.

¹ Ultraviolet Index (UVI) measures the level of UV radiation from the Sun. The higher the number on the UVI index, the higher the radiation level. A UV Index of 3 or more indicates that protection from the sun is required.

Our sun protection policy:

All students and staff will use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels are 3 and above. Particular care is taken between September and April (between 10am and 4pm) when UVI levels reach their peak.

This policy is adopted from *[DATE]* so that children attending *[NAME OF SCHOOL/KURA]* are protected from harmful UVR from the Sun.

Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap

We will protect students and staff by:

1. Slip into Shade | Whakaritea he wāhi marumaru

- Making sure there are shelters, such as trees and other shade areas providing enough coverage for all tamariki and staff when they are outside.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning outdoor activities, gatherings and excursions. If no shade is available, consider rescheduling outdoor activities to early morning or late afternoon when UVR is less intense.
- As part of school planning, the school leadership team will consider how to increase shade where it is lacking. When re-modelling, planning new buildings, playgrounds and high use areas, providing shade will be considered from the start of the planning process.

2. Slip on Sun Protective Clothing | Kuhunga he kākahu parekiri

- When outside, tamariki wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. If a uniform is not required, whānau are encouraged to dress children in tops with sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts or skirts.
- Some cover up clothing is provided if required.
- Rash tops are encouraged for outdoor swimming and water play.

3. Slap on a Hat | Whakamauria he pōtae whānui te peha

- When outside, students are required to wear a hat that protects their face, neck and ears, such as a legionnaire, broad-brimmed (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or deep crown bucket hat (minimum 6 cm brim). Baseball caps and visors do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.
- Students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to play in the shade or indoors (see hat exemption below).
- Students and staff may be exempt from wearing a sunhat due to cultural or religious beliefs. In this case, other methods of sun protection, such as seeking shade, and wearing sunscreen and sunglasses should be emphasised.

4. Slop on Sunscreen | Pania he kirīmi pare tīkākā I mua I te putanga ki waho I te whare

- A water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher that meets the Australian and NZ standard (AS/NZ 2604) is available for staff and student's use. Use a

cream, lotion or gel sunscreen. Aerosol sunscreens are not as effective as it is difficult to ensure enough sunscreen is applied evenly to the skin.

- Sunscreen is applied **at least 20 minutes** before going outdoors and **re-applied every two hours** or more frequently if sweating or swimming (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions on the bottle). Sunscreen is not used to extend time outside.
- Students are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen.
- Routine breaks are provided during outdoor activities for students to reapply sunscreen.
- If children are playing in water, sunscreen that is used is water resistant.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool place and products past their expiry date are not used.

5. Wrap on Sunglasses | Kuhunga he mōwhiti rā

- Where practical, sunglasses are recommended.
- Sunglasses should be close fitting and cover as much of the eye area as possible. They should meet the AS/NZ Standard 1067 (this is usually marked on the arm or swing-tag of the sunglasses).

6. Reinforce and role model SunSmart behaviour | Turuki me te whakatauirā whanonga SunSmart

School educators/staff protect themselves and act as role models by:

- Wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside.
- Applying broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and re-applying every 2 hours.
- Using shade whenever possible.

7. SunSmart information and skills | Pārongo Sunsmart me ngā pūkenga

- Our school/kura is encouraged to join the free SunSmart Schools programme run by the Cancer Society which supports schools to be SunSmart and provides SunSmart accreditation.
- The students learn about the harmful effects of UVR and the need for sun protection through learning programmes. The school may utilise free curriculum resources from the Cancer Society available from: www.sunsmartschools.co.nz/teachers/curriculum-resources.html
- Educators are aware of the free online professional development SunSmart module at <https://bit.ly/3wqyRJV>
- Sun protection policy is reinforced through staff and student activities and displays.
- Staff and families are provided with information on the school sun protection policy and practices at enrolment and from then on through family newsletters, school apps, notice boards, meetings and before school excursions and sports days.

When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of our school's sun protection policy.
- Asked to ensure their child wears sun protective clothing if a uniform is not required.
- Asked to provide a water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 for their child (if not provided by the school).
- Whānau and visitors are expected to practice SunSmart behaviours when at the school and on school trips and encouraged to also do this when outdoors within the broader community.

8. Monitoring and Review | Aroturuki me te Arotake

- Management and staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy at least every two to three years and revise the policy when required.
- Ensure the policy is available to staff, families, and visitors.

Policy prepared by: *[NAME]*

On: *[DATE]*

Policy review: *[DATE]*

Useful links

- SunSmart Schools: www.sunsmartschools.co.nz
- General SunSmart information: www.cancer.org.nz
- To find out if the UVI level is 3 or above download the free UVNZ app for Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.jgrburke.uvzn> or iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/nz/app/uvnz/id1472452897>
- Staff and parents can learn all about sun protection by completing the free Cancer Society SunSmart online professional development module: <https://bit.ly/3wqyRJV>

Aotearoa NZ legislation and requirements

There is no statutory obligation to have a policy to protect students, staff, educators and visitors from the sun, but there are general requirements for schools to manage the risk to health and safety from exposure to the sun appropriately.

Students:

- Education and Training Act 2020. Supporting student's health, safety and wellbeing www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0038/latest/LMS170676.html
- Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga. Protection from UV radiation in schools: www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/anaging-risks-and-hazards-at-school/
- Ministry of Education. Shade Structures at schools www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/projects-and-design/design/design-standards/shade-structures/

Educators, staff and visitors:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html
- Worksafe Mahi Haumarū Aotearoa: protect your staff from solar UV radiation www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/protecting-workers-from-solar-uv-radiation/

For further support and information, please contact your local Cancer Society:
www.cancer.org.nz/about-us/find-a-cancer-society-office-near-you/