



## SUN SMART POLICY

### INTENT

Merrimac SHS will seek to ensure the policy is implemented during the daily local sun protection times, and not just Terms 1 and 4. If unable to check the sun protection times each day, the policy will be implemented from mid-August until the end of April.

### RATIONALE

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70. Melanoma is the third most commonly diagnosed cancers in Australian males and females, yet most skin cancers can be prevented by using sun protection measures at appropriate times of the year.

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

Given school hours fall within peak UV periods of the day, a comprehensive policy will assist schools to adopt healthy UV practices.

### IMPLEMENTATION

The sun protection times are forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day UV levels are predicted to reach 3 or higher, based on your location. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types. In Queensland, [UV levels](#) are forecast to reach 3 or higher at all times of the year.

To assist with the implementation of this policy, staff and students are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times via the [free SunSmart app](#), [sunsmart.com.au](#) or [bom.gov.au](#).

The sun protection measures listed in this policy are used for all outdoor activities **during the daily local sun protection times**. This policy is considered in the planning of all outdoor events such as assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events.

Implementation throughout Terms 1 and 4 only is insufficient to protect against UV risks.

### PROCEDURES

#### 1. Clothing

- The formal school uniform/dress codes include:
  - A shirt with a collar that sits close to the neck, above the collarbone.
  - Longer-style skirts, shorts and pants at least to the knee.
- The sport uniform/dress code includes:
  - A shirt that covers the shoulders well.
  - Longer-style skirts, shorts and pants (at least to the mid-thigh).
- Students must wear rash vests or t-shirts during all water-based activities at outdoor venues, except during competition and specific timed swim activities. When students are not in the pool (ie at carnivals or spectating), students must wear board shorts or school sports shorts”.



## 2. Hats

- Students are strongly encouraged to wear the Merrimac SHS broad-brimmed hat or cap whenever they are outside. Students in the High-Performance Sports (HPS) selective entry program are provided a HPS bucket hat, which is compulsory to be worn during all training and outdoor learning activities. For all students, wearing of non-Merrimac SHS hats is banned. Merrimac SHS strives to empower students to develop the capacity to make healthy and safe choices as students' progress through their adolescence years.

## 3. Sunscreen

- The school supplies SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students to use AND/OR students are reminded and encouraged to bring their own SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to school.
- Staff encourage students to use sunscreen and provide time for students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.
- The school community is educated about the correct use of sunscreen and the level of protection it provides (apply 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours, or immediately after physical activity and swimming).

## 4. Shade

- The school council ensures shade is available in the school grounds, particularly in areas where students congregate – for example, lunch areas, canteen, and outdoor lesson areas.
- The school council ensures shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside, particularly if they do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing.

## 5. Sunglasses [if practical]

- Where practical in outdoor environments, students are encouraged 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.



## 6. Staff role-modelling and OHS

- As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff:
  - Wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical (in outdoor environments), sunglasses;
  - Apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen; and
  - Seek shade whenever possible.
- SunSmart information is included in staff handbook/orientation materials
- Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote sun protection education across the curriculum.

## 7. Families and visitors

- Families and visitors to the school are asked to do the following when outdoors:
  - Wear a sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical (in outdoor environments), sunglasses;
  - Apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen; and
  - Seek shade whenever possible.
- The school's UV policy is easily accessible to staff, students and parents.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through a variety of channels such as newsletters, staff meetings and school assemblies.

## 8. Curriculum

- Students are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures to the whole school community.
- Programs on sun protection are incorporated into appropriate areas of the curriculum.

### *MONITORING AND REVIEW*

- The school council, staff and SRC monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required.
- SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families, students and visitors.

**Next policy review due: July 2023**