POLICY TITLE: SUN PROTECTION P-6

POLICY DATE: July 2026

School Context

Opened in 1960, Red Hill School caters to a diverse student clientele in the inner south of Canberra, drawing families from diplomatic, government, defence force, university and other backgrounds. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Red Hill School provides an inclusive, international education for students in preschool to year 6. The Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework are delivered through the five essential elements of the IB's Primary Years Programme (PYP).

Purpose

This policy recognises the dangers associated with over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR). The policy aims, so far as reasonably practicable, to provide sun protection for students, staff and volunteers during all outdoor school activities.

When UV levels reach 3 and above a combination of sun protection behaviour is required by all students, staff and volunteers. UV exposure for extended periods of time can also be harmful even when the UV levels are below 3. Sun protection is therefore required for students, staff and volunteers when undertaking outdoor activities, both when UV levels are 3 and above, and when outdoors for extended periods of time.

The policy's success relies on the acknowledgment and acceptance by schools and parents/carers that this is a shared responsibility.

Beliefs that underpin our Sun Protection Policy

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world - one out of two Australians will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation is a major contributory factor in the development of skin cancer, including melanoma.

Ultraviolet radiation comes both from direct sunlight and "skylight" as it is scattered in the atmosphere. Ultraviolet radiation is also reflected from surrounding surfaces such as water, sand, concrete and snow. High levels of radiation are received in wide open areas, such as school ovals, even on a cloudy day.

Ultraviolet radiation is 3 and above for part or most of each day between August and May in Canberra, peaking in December and January (i.e., terms 1 and 4). The middle of the day is when ultraviolet radiation is highest. Outdoor events therefore need to be minimised, when possible, between 11.00a.m and 3.00p.m during the summer/Daylight Saving Time. Damage to children's skin can occur before and after these hours but it takes longer.

Most Australians receive the bulk of their Vitamin D supply from exposing their skin to small amounts of ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Due to low levels of ultraviolet radiation in Canberra during the winter months, The Cancer Council ACT does not generally recommend sun protection in June and July unless outdoors for extended periods. This is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region.

The ACT Education Directorate and school have a duty of care and responsibility to ensure that adequate sun protection is provided for all students and workers, including pre-service teachers and volunteers.

Sun Protection Implementation Guidelines

1. Sun Protective Clothing

1.1 Red Hill School will require students and staff(including volunteers and preservice teachers) to wear SunSmart hats when outside during the August to May period. SunSmart hats will also be recommended in June and July, particularly during extended periods of outdoor activity. For the purpose of this policy SunSmart hats are defined as broad-brimmed (min. 6cm brim), bucket (min. 5cm brim with a deep crown) or legionnaire hats with adequate side flaps that protect the face, ears, neck and crown of the head. Caps are not considered SunSmart.

1.2 SunSmart hats should have cords removed or have safety cords which are designed to break under minimal strain as they can become a strangulation risk if caught on fixed playground equipment.

1.3 Red Hill School will support the wearing of sun protective clothing: loose fitting, closely woven cotton fabrics and shirts with a collar and/or long sleeves during outdoor sport, break times, school camps and excursions.

1.4 Adults will wear appropriate sunglasses. Students will also have the option to wear sunglasses. Parents should ensure that these meet the Australian Standard for ultraviolet protection and are labelled A.S. 1067. A close fitting wrap-around pair will offer best protection.

1.5 All members of the school community will model SunSmart practices by wearing SunSmart protective clothing.

1.6 SunSmart clothes will be sold at the Uniform Store.

1.7 Students will wear SunSmart rash shirts or t-shirts when participating in outdoor swimming programs, carnivals or recreational water play at a pool.

2. Shade

2.1 Students will be encouraged to play in the designated shade areas for each play zone:

- 2.1.1 the "forest' area next to the new oval
- 2.1.2 the outdoor shade structure near the spiderweb equipment and basketball court
- 2.1.3 the covered 'oval equipment'
- 2.1.4 the covered asphalt equipment', handball courts and sand pit on the asphalt area
- 2.1.5 at preschool in the shade of the trees or under cover i.e., on the verandah, in the cubby houses and under shade sail.

2.2 School staff will consistently enforce the policy ***no hat/ play in the shade***. If a student does not have an approved SunSmart hat they will be expected to play in the designated shade areas (see above).

2.3 Wherever possible staff will organise outdoor education programs to best protect students from peak ultraviolet radiation times. Outdoor events will therefore be minimised, if possible, between 11am and 3pm during the summer/daylight saving period. On days when the UV level is particularly high staff will conduct a dynamic risk assessment and relocate specific play areas to indoor spaces or alternative shaded areas.

2.4 The school and the parent community will ensure that there is appropriate and effective shade at the school and will continue to provide more shade where it feels necessary in the future, including tree planting for future generations.

3. Sunscreen

3.1. Staff will support the use of broad spectrum and water-resistant SPF 50+ sunscreen on exposed skin that cannot be protected by clothing.

3.2. Parents will be encouraged to check UV levels and apply sunscreen before their child leaves home, if the levels warrant this. They will also be encouraged to provide 50+ broad spectrum and water-resistant sunscreen for their child to use at school.

3.3 Teachers are not expected to apply sunscreen to students but will remind students to do so every two hours and will supervise and assist younger students where necessary. During the normal school day teachers will remind students to reapply sunscreen twenty minutes prior to the lunch and recess breaks and/or before participating in outdoor activities, including physical education lessons.

At swimming carnivals and other all day outdoor events, students will be reminded to reapply sunscreen every two hours.

3.4 Sunscreen will be available in classrooms, at the front office and at first aid stations for students to use prior to and at outdoor events i.e., outdoor play, sports carnivals, PE lessons, excursions.

3.5 Parents must notify the school on their child's medical form at the beginning of the year if he/she is allergic to sunscreen. Parents/carers have the option of providing a hypoallergenic sunscreen for their children. Parents/carers are also expected to inform the school if they do not wish workers to apply sunscreen to their children.

4. Education Programs

4.1 SunSmart education will be an ongoing part of the school curriculum.

4.2 Students will be regularly reminded to:

SLIP on some sun-protective clothing

SLOP on SPF 50+ sunscreen (broad spectrum, water resistant)

SLAP on a hat (that protects your face, head, neck and ears)

SEEK shade

SLIDE on sunglasses (that meet Australian standards)

4.3 All school staff will be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the daily SunSmart UV Index to assist them better with sun protection times in Canberra.

5. Work Health and Safety

5.1 Under Work Health and Safety legislation, the school has a duty of care to protect all workers from foreseeable harm, and this includes occupational UV exposure. Workers also have a responsibility to protect themselves from over-exposure to solar UVR when at work.

6. Timeline

6.1 During the winter months of June and July the students and workers will not be required to wear a SunSmart hat or apply sunscreen. This is recommended by Cancer Council ACT and is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency. However sensible sun UV protection may still be warranted if spending extended periods outdoors during these months e.g., at all day outdoor sporting events and excursions. The wearing of hats will continue to be recommended during June and July.

7. Communication

7.1 Parents will be informed of the school's sun UV protection guidelines by publishing the guidelines in the school handbook, school newsletters, excursion information and Toddle messages.

7.2 A full copy of the Directorates *Sun UV Protection Policy* will also be available for inspection.

7.3 The school will actively promote positive sun UV protection behaviour and attitudes at school events, including assemblies.

As an accredited SunSmart school Red Hill Primary is committed to continuing its affiliation with the Cancer Council ACT National SunSmart Schools Program. This policy will be submitted to Cancer Council ACT every three years to be reviewed and will be updated accordingly to maintain high SunSmart standards and best practice.

References:

Cancer Council ACT National SunSmart Schools Program (2022)

Sun (UV) Protection for Students (ACT Education Directorate, 2025)