

## SUN AWARENESS POLICY

### RATIONALE

Sacred Heart College is a Catholic, learning community in the Mercy tradition and has at its centre the dignity of each person. Our core Mercy values underpin all our endeavours and in particular, the Mercy value of Respect compels us to take care of both our personal and community well-being so that each member can reach and maintain optimal health, and ultimately flourish.

Moderate exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is important for one's overall health, however balance is vital. High UV exposure can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage, and ultimately skin cancer. Overexposure to UV rays during childhood and adolescence is now known to be a major cause of skin cancer, with Australia having one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world (Cancer Council, Australia 2016). Too little UV exposure however, can also lead to low vitamin D levels which has been associated with both physical and mental ill-health. It is important therefore that all community members are aware of the risk and protective elements of UV radiation.

### DEFINITIONS

UV - Ultra Violet

UVI - Ultra Violet Radiation Index - A rating of 1(low) to 11+ (extreme)

### POLICY STATEMENT

Our policy is to promote awareness of the need for protection from the sun, especially during high-risk periods (UVI 3+), and also the benefits of some daily exposure to low UV radiation.

This policy aims to be both educational and preventive in nature so that staff, students and their families take proactive steps to protect and enhance their physical and mental well-being. Sun protection is needed whenever UVI levels reach 3+. In Victoria the average UVI is 3+ from September to the end of April. During these months extra care is needed between 10am - 3pm when UVI levels reach their peak.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Responsibility of the College

Sacred Heart College aims to minimize the dangers of high UV exposure for both staff and students, whilst at the same time encouraging all community members to have daily incidental exposure through:

- Increasing student's awareness of skin cancer and the risk factors.
- Assisting students to build agency and adopt practical skin protection measures.
- Discouraging students from remaining in the sun for extended periods during high UVI times.
- Working towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students and staff.
- Giving consideration to the availability of shade when planning excursions and outdoor activities.
- Encouraging students, their families, and staff to wear protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen at high-risk times, as well as on sports days, excursions and camps.
- Encouraging students to expose themselves to small amounts of sun during low risk periods e.g. in the morning or late afternoon.
- Informing parents of the College's Sun Awareness policy.
- Incorporating sun protection and skin cancer awareness programs into appropriate areas of the curriculum.
- Encouraging staff, including coaches, instructors and grounds staff act as role models by:
  - Wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outdoors
  - Applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
  - Seeking shade whenever possible

#### Responsibility of Students

To be sun aware and maximize protection, students are to:

- Check the UVI each day which can be found on the College website (School Policies page).
- Avoid deliberate, prolonged sun exposure during high UVI times.
- Wear a hat or be in the shade, especially during Terms 1 and 4.
- Wear a hat to all PE classes and sporting events in Terms 1 and 4.
- Wear sunglasses if there is to be prolonged sun exposure e.g. during sporting events.
- Apply sunscreen when going outside. Sunscreen is available at Student Reception, the O'Dwyer and Talbot gyms and the wellbeing centre (IDBody). It is also supplied by the College at all PE and sporting events e.g. swimming and athletics carnivals
- Where possible, wear sun protective clothing when on camps and excursions.

### **Responsibility of families**

As the primary educators of their children, the expectations created by families in relation to sun protection and exposure will have the greatest impact on the well-being of students. The role of the family therefore is to:

- Be familiar with the College's Sun Awareness Policy.
- Ensure their child has the official College sun hat for Terms 1 and 4 and for sporting events or camps.
- Promote sun awareness and support the College in the application of this policy with students.

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date Approved: 26 October 2022

Name: Anna Negro, Principal

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date presented at Advisory Council Meeting: 26 October 2022

Sponsor: Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching

Person responsible for implementation: Principal

Reviewed by:

- School Committee: College Leadership Team
- Sub Committee of the College Council: N/A
- Student Leadership House Focus Team: N/A

Location checklist:  Staff Handbook  Student Space  Parent Portal  Website

### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date approved	Next review
1.0	May 2019	2019
2.0	October 2022	2025