

Rationale

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer during their lifetime. Overexposure to the sun during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer.

Definitions

SunSmart

Being SunSmart means understanding the dangers of exposure to the sun and taking appropriate measures including the use of sunscreen and protective clothing to reduced long-term damage

SunSmart UV Alert

The SunSmart UV Alert is a tool you can use to protect yourself from UV radiation. It is based on the Global Solar UV Index, a rating system adopted from the World Health Organisation. The higher the Index value, the greater the potential for damage to your skin. The Bureau of Meteorology issues the Alert when the UV Index is forecast to reach 3, a level that can damage your skin and lead to skin cancer. At that level, you need to be SunSmart. The SunSmart UV Alert is reported in most newspapers and some television and radio weather forecasts across Australia



Example of print version SunSmart UV Alert

Principles

- All children and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above* to ensure they are well protected from the sun. Particular care is taken between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) when UV Index levels reach their peak during the day.
- Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events e.g. assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events. Where possible, we have outdoor activities or events earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, or we try using indoor venues.
- Our sun protection policy is followed during Terms 1 and 4 and whenever the UV Index level reaches 3 and above*.

Goals

The goals of the SunSmart Policy are to:

- Increase student and community awareness about skin cancer and sun protection
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the school community
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's SunSmart policy

Strategies

1. Shade

- Students are encouraged to congregate in shaded areas of the school grounds e.g. outdoor lunch, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.
- In consultation with the school board, shade provision will be considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities.
- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

2. Clothing

- We recommend parents send children to school in sun protective clothing. Sun protective clothing is made of close weave fabric and includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

3. Hats

- Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket hats, whenever they are outside. (Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.) We encourage parents to leave a hat with a name on it at school so it is not forgotten.

4. Sunscreen

- Parents should send children to school with SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen on.
- Water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and children's use in cases where this has been forgotten. Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.
- Staff remind children to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.

5. Role modelling

- Staff act as role models by:
 - wearing sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
 - applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
 - seeking shade whenever possible
- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

6. Curriculum

- Programs on skin cancer prevention are included in the curriculum. SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

7. Review

- The school board and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy (at least once every three years) and revise the policy when required.

Relevant Documents / Links

- Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide: 4.5.11 Skin protection
www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide/enviro/default.htm
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Sections 21 and 23: Main Duties of Employers
Section 25: Duties of Employees
- www.worksafe.vic.gov.au > Laws and Regulations > Acts and Regulations
- *SunSmart UV Alert (issued whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above)
www.sunsmart.com.au or www.bom.gov.au/announcements/uv/

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