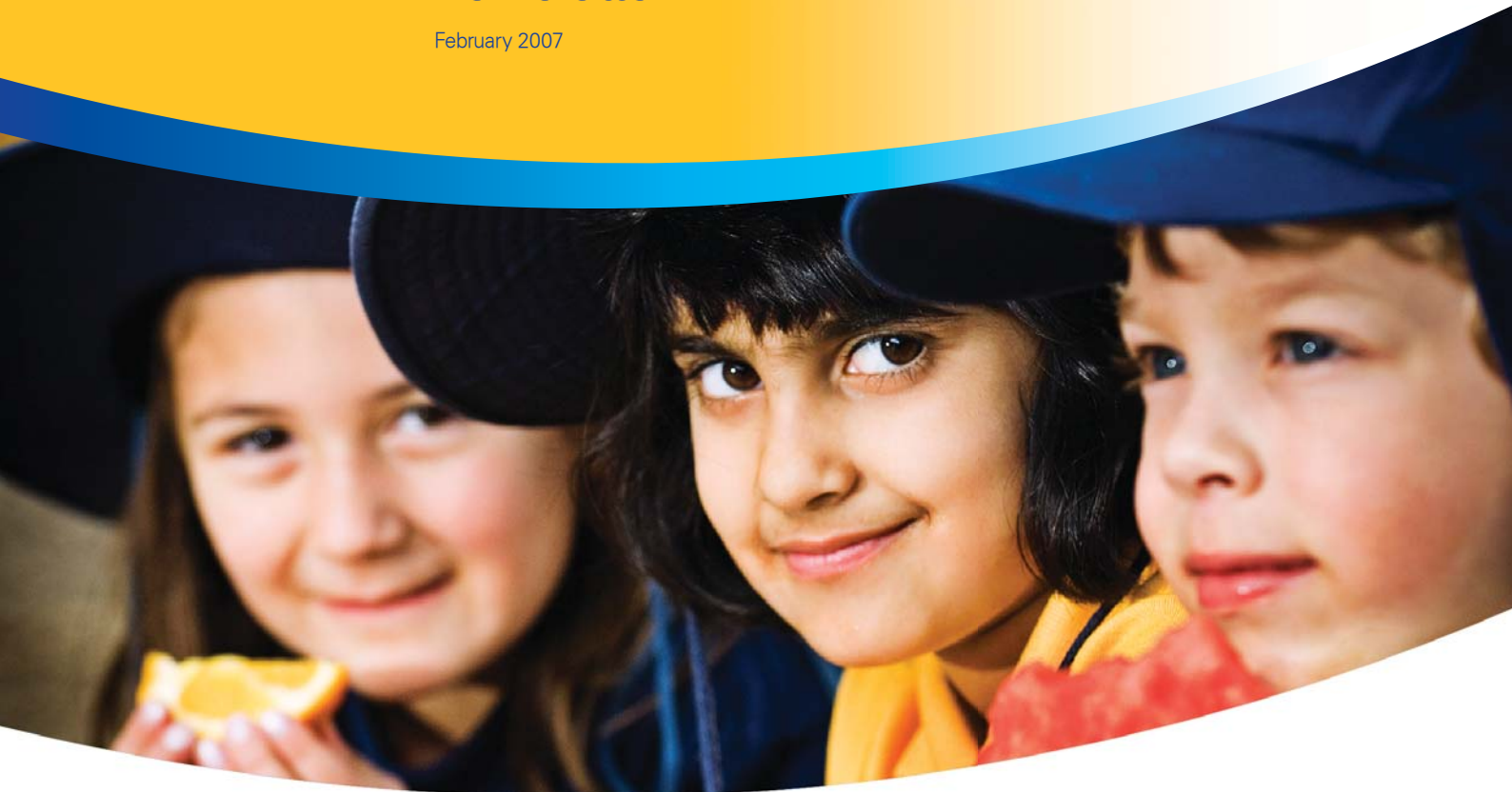


Primary Schools newsletter

February 2007



Hello and a very happy and healthy New Year to you all. Welcome to the first edition of the Primary Schools News Bulletin for 2007. Far too quickly the summer holidays are over and Term 1 is well under way. This is the time for all schools to ensure that their skin protection policy and practices are in place and fully implemented.

I have included a SunSmart Policy Checklist to help with reviewing and updating your skin protection policy to ensure that it meets the current recommendations of The Cancer Council. A skin protection policy should be reviewed at least every two years to make certain that it remains current and appropriate.

Becoming a Registered SunSmart School shows the wider school community that there is a commitment to providing a sun safe environment. It is also a way of acknowledging the good work the school has done in the area of skin cancer prevention.

If you would like to join the National SunSmart School program and receive a large SunSmart School sign and free resource material please download an application form from our website www.cancersa.org.au or contact me by email on cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au or Tel: 8291 4149.

Need a new SunSmart School sign?

If you are already a SunSmart School and your SunSmart School sign is looking old and weather beaten, please send me a purchase order for \$20 and I will send you out a brand new sign to brighten up your fence or wall.

Carmel McNamara
Early Childhood and Primary Schools Project Officer

Vacation Care and swimming programs – need to be SunSmart too!

When reviewing your policy and practice please ensure that any OSHC programs, particularly Vacation Care held on your school site, are included. While skin protection has become well established and routine within most primary schools and early childhood services, information gained from a research project, *Sun Protection Practices in Vacation Care Settings*, undertaken in 2004, showed that skin protection is not carried across to many vacation programs. It is important for schools to ensure that their skin protection policy incorporates OSHC programs, where applicable, so that consistent policy and practice is implemented across all areas of the school community. It is also a way of providing an avenue for OSHC services to access current SunSmart information.

I regularly take calls around this time of the year from concerned parents because their children have been sunburnt during school swimming programs. It is important that schools are vigilant in checking students have adequate protection – if an indoor venue is not possible then T-shirts or rash vests over bathers, appropriate hats, access to shade and regular use of sunscreen are all needed.

A comprehensive skin protection policy should have all these elements included.

SunSmart UV Alert – have a direct link on your computer

Ultraviolet radiation (UV) is the part of the sunlight that causes damage to your skin. When the UV radiation level reaches 3 or above it is strong enough to cause damage to unprotected skin. In South Australia the UV levels are generally 3 and above from the beginning of September until the end of April. There are times during May and August where the UV level can also reach 3 or higher so we need to monitor the UV levels during these months.

The SunSmart UV Alert is a tool that can be used to find out when to protect your skin from UV radiation. It is based on the Global Solar UV Index, a rating system that indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reached the earth's surface. The higher the index value the greater potential for skin damage. The SunSmart UV Alert is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and tells you the time of day when the UV Index is forecast to be 3 and above.

The SunSmart UV Alert published daily on the Advertiser weather page is the UV Alert for Adelaide. Further information on specific sites around South Australia is available at

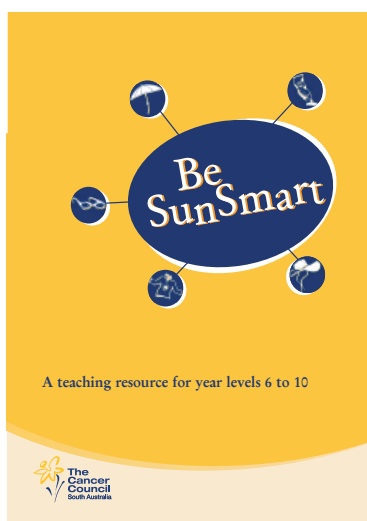
<http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv/>

To be able to access to the UV level in Adelaide easily put the following link http://www.bom.gov.au/products/UV/Adelaide_SA.shtml into your Favourites on your computer.



Being SunSmart – a guide for primary schools – updated policy resource now available.

The updated SunSmart policy guidelines booklet for primary schools is now available. A copy was sent to all primary schools in South Australia in September 2006 but if you require another copy please contact The Cancer Council South Australia resource centre on 13 11 20. There is no charge for this resource.



Risks and benefits of sun exposure

There has been quite a lot of discussion recently about the health benefits of sun exposure versus adequate skin protection. It is also a growing area of research so further information will become available in the future.

The Cancer Council does not advise people to avoid the sun totally as it recognises that some safe sun exposure is needed for good health. A balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of skin cancer and getting enough ultraviolet radiation exposure to maintain adequate Vitamin D levels.

Sun exposure is the cause of 99% of non-melanoma skin cancers and around 95% of melanoma in Australia, however ultraviolet radiation B (UVB) exposure in small amounts is essential to good health.

Here are some points that have been put together to reflect the current information in relation to skin protection and adequate Vitamin D levels.

- At such times when the UV radiation level is 3 or above, skin protection is recommended as the UV rays are intense enough to damage the skin.
- In South Australia, the UV levels are generally 3 and above every day from September to the end of April. There are also some days in May and August where the UV level can also reach 3 so we need to monitor the UV levels during these months,
- The higher the UV level, the less time it takes for skin and eye damage to occur. UV radiation levels are most intense between the hours of 10am and 3pm.
- From September until the end of April most people in South Australia will get enough vitamin D going about their normal day to day activities, even when using sun protection. From May to August, 2-3 hours over a week sun exposure to the face, arms and hands will produce sufficient vitamin D for most people.
- People with dark skin require more ultraviolet radiation exposure to produce adequate levels of vitamin D than people with fair skin, as the pigment in their skin reduces ultraviolet radiation absorption.
- People with very fair skin and who burn easily need to take extra care to protect their skin.
- Sensible skin protection should not put most people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- Any concerns should always be discussed with a medical practitioner.

Because of the risks of overexposure to UV radiation, consistently and deliberately spending time out in the sun without any form of skin protection when the UV index is 3 and above is not recommended, even for those diagnosed with vitamin D deficiency.

People at higher risk of Vitamin D deficiency

Recent studies have established that particular groups of people living in Australia have low levels of Vitamin D. They tend to live in the southern states of Australia (where UV radiation levels are lower in the winter months), and usually have very little exposure to the sun. They include:

- the elderly, particularly those who do not go outdoors very often. Older people also don't produce Vitamin D as effectively as they did when they were younger.

- babies of mothers who have low levels of Vitamin D
- people with dark skin, who naturally have more melanin. (the pigment that reduces the amount of UV radiation getting through the skin)
- people who cover their skin and heads with clothing and veils for cultural or religious reasons, so less skin is exposed to UV radiation.

These groups of people often have little exposure to the sun, especially during winter if they live in the southern half of Australia. This is usually why they may not produce enough vitamin D. People with a diagnosed vitamin D deficiency may need dietary supplements of Vitamin D rather than additional exposure to UV rays, and should be advised by their doctor.

Reference

The Risks and Benefits of Sun Exposure -Position Statement 2005. Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society, Osteoporosis Australia, the Australasian College of Dermatologists and The Cancer Council Australia.

Further information can be found on the following websites

The Cancer Council Australia
www.cancer.org.au

Osteoporosis Australia
<http://www.osteoporosis.org.au/html/index.php>

The Australasian College of Dermatologists
<http://www.dermcoll.asn.au/>

New SunSmart Schools



I would like to congratulate the following schools for joining the National SunSmart Schools program

Woodend Primary School

Myponga Primary School

Renmark Primary School

Woodville Primary School (incorporates Woodville Centre for Hearing Impaired Children)

Moonta Area School

Karoonda Area School

Whyalla Town Primary School

St John's Lutheran PS - Eudunda

Westbourne Park Primary School

St Michael's College Primary Campus

St Joseph's Primary School - Clare

Hawker Area School

Rosedale Primary School

Lyndoch Primary School

Surrey Downs Primary School

Booleroo Centre District School

East Marden Primary School

St Joseph's Parish School - Gladstone

Hillcrest Primary School

St Mary's Memorial School

St Francis Xavier's Regional Catholic School

Winkie Primary School

Robertstown Primary School

Blackwood Primary School

Port Neill Primary School

Crafers Primary School

St Francis De Sales School

Tumby Bay Area School

Mount Gambier North Primary School

Redwood Park Primary School

Brown's Well District Area School

Augusta Park Primary School

Spalding Primary School

Tarpeena Primary School

Reynella East Primary School

Solomontown Primary School

Banksia Park Primary School

The Cancer Council South Australia's Speakers' Bureau

Did you know that The Cancer Council South Australia provides a range of speakers who will come to your school to talk to staff and/or parent groups about skin cancer – from prevention to early detection.


Skin cancer prevention is a very popular topic and assists school communities to remain up to date with information and available resources. Speakers can also provide a presentation on nutrition, physical activity or bowel cancer prevention.

To book a speaker on skin cancer prevention, physical activity, nutrition and bowel cancer prevention or any cancer-related topic, please contact the Speakers Bureau Coordinator on 8291 4111 or download the request forms from the Speakers Bureau section on the website www.cancersa.org.au

Please note that the Speakers Bureau does not cater for student groups. Contact The Cancer Council Resource Centre, on 13 11 20 for information about student resources.



Please use this checklist to review your skin protection policy and practice.

	<p>Policy review checklist for South Australian early childhood services</p>
	<p>In South Australia it is recommended that a skin protection policy be implemented from the beginning of September until the end of April and when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 and above at other times. The policy incorporates OSHC and Vacation Care programs if held on school campus.</p>
	<p>All students wear a broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat (bucket hat must have a deep crown and minimum 6cm brim) whenever they are outside from Sept till end April or when the UVR level is above 3 outside of these times.</p>
	<p>Appropriate sun protective clothing is included in the school uniform / dress code. This includes the wearing of T-shirts or rash vests over bathers for outdoor swimming.</p>
	<p>Particular care is taken during the peak UVR times of between 10am and 3pm, (from Sept until the end April) and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times where possible. Sports Days and other outdoor events are to be held at twilight times or during 2nd and 3rd Terms where appropriate.</p>
	<p>Students are actively encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities.</p>
	<p>Students who do not have appropriate hats with them are asked to play in an area protected from the sun.</p>
	<p>Staff act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviours including appropriate hat wearing when outdoors.</p>
	<p>The use of SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is encouraged, with time for application of sunscreen allowed.</p>
	<p>Programs on skin cancer prevention are included in the curriculum of at least three year levels.</p>
	<p>SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community (eg. via newsletters, assemblies) and all new families and staff members are informed of the policy.</p>
	<p>The school has sufficient shade or is working towards increasing the number of trees and shade structures so as to provide adequate sun protected areas in the school grounds.</p>
	<p>The school reviews its sun protection policy regularly (at least every 2 years) by monitoring the school's compliance with its policy and making suggestions for improvement.</p>
<p>Plans for next 12 months:</p>	

If you have any questions or require further information please contact Carmel McNamara, SunSmart Schools Program on 08 8291 4149 or by email cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au