

# Primary Schools newsletter

October 2007



Hello and welcome to the next edition of the SunSmart Schools News Bulletin. This is the time of the year to ensure that the skin protection policy at your school is up to date and actively in place. It is also the time to remind all staff and families in your community about the policy and what their responsibilities are.

The Cancer Council South Australia recommends that all schools have a comprehensive skin protection policy in place when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 and above. In South Australia this is generally from the beginning of September until the end of April. Care should also be taken during other months when the UV level is 3 or above. A comprehensive policy should incorporate the OSHC and Vacation Care service of the school (if applicable) and cover areas such as

- appropriate hat and clothing wearing
- rescheduling of outdoor activities
- adequate provision of shade
- correct use of sunscreen
- curriculum information
- role modelling by staff and visitors

Don't get caught out – this is the time of year that people and children often get sun burnt because they tend to stay out in the sun, unprotected, for longer.

On the back page of this newsletter is some information about the UV Alert to photocopy for your newsletter or to put up on a notice board.

## Time to join the National SunSmart Schools Program

If your school is not already a registered SunSmart School then this is a good time to join hundreds of other schools across Australia that have gained SunSmart School status. If your school is doing a great job in providing a sun safe environment for your students and staff, why not become a SunSmart School? Just fill out the application questionnaire and send it back in with a copy of your skin protection policy. Your application will then be assessed to ensure that it is in line with the national standard criteria.

Once your school has gained SunSmart status you will receive a large aluminium SunSmart School sign. This lets the wider school community know that the school is committed to providing a sun safe environment for students and staff.

If you would like to become a SunSmart School simply download the application form from [www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au) or contact me directly on t 08 8291 4149 or by email [cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au](mailto:cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au)

If you haven't updated your skin protection policy in the last two years then now is the time to do so. A SunSmart Primary Schools Checklist can be found on The Cancer Council South Australia's website [www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au) to help you.

Carmel McNamara, Early Childhood & Primary Schools Project Officer  
t 08 8291 4149 or [cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au](mailto:cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au)

# Need a replacement SunSmart School sign?

If you are already 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.

## Resources

### Updated Be SunSmart teaching resource

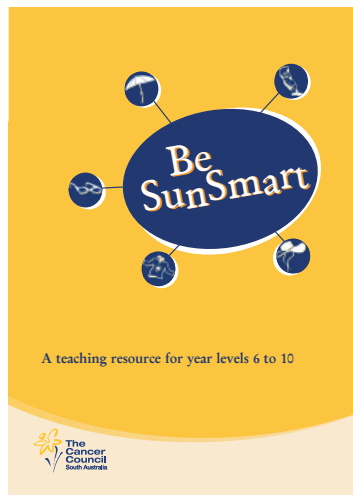
Be SunSmart – a teaching resource for year levels 6 – 10 - has been updated and is now available free of charge. It is for teachers to use with middle years students or older. There are a total of 30 activities which relate to particular SunSmart topics. Many of the activities have associated fact sheets and worksheets which teachers are free to photocopy for classroom use. Each activity has a list of assessment outcomes, aims, requirements, teacher guidelines and extension activities.

The book can be used in a number of learning areas such as Health and Physical Education, Design and Technology, English, Science, Maths and Society and the Environment.

If you would like a copy contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20**.

### New Primary School poster

By now you would have received a copy of the new poster for primary schools. This is a free resource and if you would like further copies please contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20** to order some more.



## Did you know?

- Over 1,600 Australians die from skin cancer each year. (Latest available figures from 2005: 1,273 melanoma and 405 non-melanoma).
- At least 1 in every 2 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.
- Over 380,000 Australians are treated for skin cancer each year – that's over 1,000 people every day.
- Skin cancers account for around 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year in Australia.
- In young people aged 12–24 years, melanoma is the most common cancer, with more than double the number of cases of any other kind of cancer.
- In Australia, sunburn can occur in as little as 10 minutes on a fine January day.
- Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to your lifetime risk of skin cancer.
- Solariums can emit levels of UV radiation up to five times as strong as the summer midday sun.
- Most Australians apply too little sunscreen. This results in sunscreen users achieving an SPF of between 50 – 80% less than specified on the product label.
- Clear car glass (side windows) blocks about 97% of the UVB radiation and about 37% of UVA radiation. Laminated windscreens block all of the UVB radiation and about 80% of the UVA radiation.
- Australians are twice as likely to get sunburnt at home than at the beach.
- Based on current available research, it has been estimated that fair skinned people can achieve adequate vitamin D levels (>50 nmol/L) in summer by exposing the face, arms and hands or the equivalent surface area to sunlight for only a few minutes on either side of the peak UV periods on most days of the week.
- Skin cancer is almost totally preventable by protecting skin from over exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

## 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](http://www.cancersa.org.au).

Please note that the Speakers Bureau does not cater for student groups. Contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20** for information about student resources.

## Send us your SunSmart photo

I am always on the lookout for SunSmart photos to use in my newsletters. If you have a good photo that shows how SunSmart your school is and you would like it included in a newsletter please send it to me by email to [cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au](mailto:cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au). It might be at a school event, children with great hats on or staff being role models – the more SunSmart the better!

## An update from the Parents Jury

The Parents Jury is a web-based network of parents who wish to improve the food and physical activity environments for children in Australia. Below are some interesting facts about food marketing to children which has come from the Parents Jury website at [www.parentsjury.org.au](http://www.parentsjury.org.au).

### Some facts about food marketing to children

- Australian children (aged 5-12 years) watch 2-3 hours of television a day with the majority on commercial stations.
- According to a 1996 study which compared the levels of advertising across 13 different countries, Australian television shows the highest number of food advertisements per hour during children's programs in the world.
- Australian studies over the last 10 years have consistently shown between 55-81 per cent of food advertisements shown during children's viewing time are for unhealthy foods of low nutritional value such as confectionery, sweetened breakfast cereals and fast food.
- Advertisements directed at children often use sophisticated marketing techniques such as give-aways, competitions, celebrity endorsements, animations and jingles to increase a child's desire to purchase the product.
- Food advertisements often give a distorted message. Advertisements are often misleading and do not provide a clear nutritional representation.
- Children aged less than 8 years old generally do not have the critical literacy skills to recognise the persuasive intention of advertisers.
- Television food advertisements influence children's food choices and increase their pestering of parents for particular products. This undermines the attempts of parents to provide children with a healthy diet.
- Australian children are eating a high percentage of energy dense, high fat, high sugar and low fibre foods. This is consistent with the majority of foods advertised during children's television viewing times.

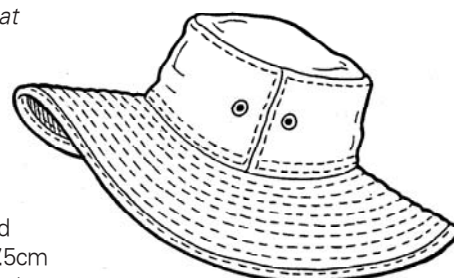
- Approximately 25-30 per cent of Australian children are overweight or obese. Australia has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the world and its prevalence is rapidly increasing.
- Overweight and obese children have a high risk (80 per cent) of becoming an overweight or obese adult. Social isolation, poor self-esteem and depression are linked to weight problems. Their chances of developing diabetes, some types of cancer and heart disease are significantly increased.

The Parents Jury would like to thank the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children for its assistance and expertise in the compilation of this material

## Hat check – make sure your school is following the SunSmart hat guidelines

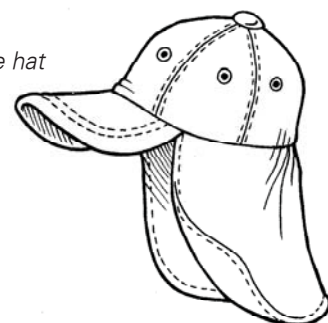
The Cancer Council recommends wearing hats that provide good shade to the face, back of neck and ears when in the sun. These include broad brimmed, legionnaire and bucket hats made of closely woven material.

*Broad brimmed hat*



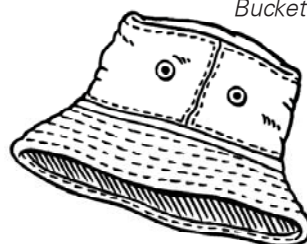
Brims on broad brimmed hats should be at least 7.5cm wide. These hats reduce the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the face and eyes by up to 50%.

*Legionnaire hat*



Legionnaire style hats should have a flap that meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face.

*Bucket hat*



Bucket hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The brim should be 6cm (5cms for children under 5 years) and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade.

Remember: Baseball caps and sun visors are NOT recommended as they do not provide enough protection to the face and leave the ears and back of the neck exposed.

## What is the 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 which indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reaches the earth's surface. The higher the Index value, the greater the potential for damage to your skin.

The Alert is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology 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.



## Be SunSmart - 5 easy steps



1. Seek shade
2. Wear protective clothing that covers your arms and legs as well as your body
3. Wear a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face and neck
4. Wear wrap-around sunglasses
5. Apply SPF30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen every two hours. Sunscreen should not be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.

### Check and Protect

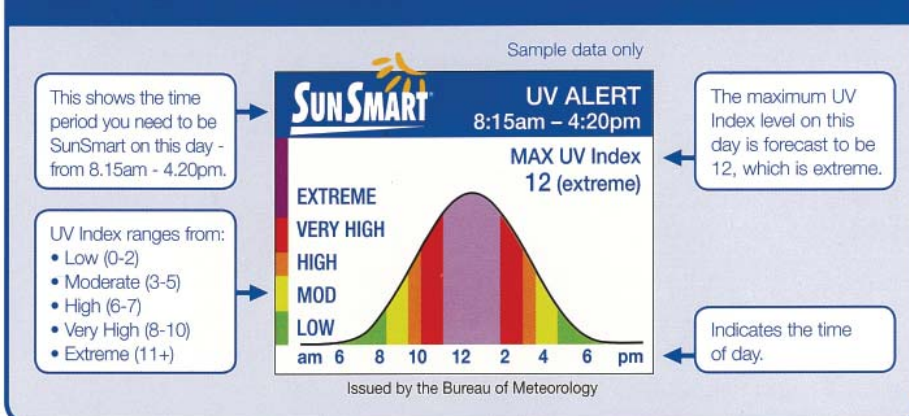
It's important for all Australians, or visitors to Australia, to look and listen for UV Index levels in local weather forecasts.

*Remember, you should use a combination of sun protection measures to keep you safe from UV radiation—never rely on just one.*

## Look for the Alert every day

The SunSmart UV Alert is reported in most newspapers and some television and radio weather forecasts across Australia.

## How to read the Alert



Further information can be found at:

**Bureau of Meteorology**  
[www.bom.gov.au/info/about\\_uv.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/about_uv.shtml)

**SunSmart**  
[www.sunsmart.com.au/uvalert](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/uvalert)

Real time UV levels can be found at:

**Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)**  
[www.arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/ad\\_rt.htm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/ad_rt.htm)