

# A sample skin protection policy for primary schools



## Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with two out of every three people developing some form of skin cancer before they are 70.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Sun exposure in the first 10 years of life determines, to a substantial degree, the likelihood of skin cancer developing later in life.

Cancer Council SA advises people protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet (UV) radiation level is 3 and above—this is when it is strong enough to cause damage to unprotected skin. For much of South Australia, UV radiation levels are 3 and above everyday from September to April and it is during these months that sun protection is necessary.

Cancer Council SA recommends that a skin protection policy be in place from 1 September until 30 April when UV radiation levels are 3 and above. It is highly recommended that UV radiation levels are monitored, particularly during May and August as they still may be 3 or above depending on your location. Cancer Council SA also recommends that particular care should be taken between 10 am – 3.00 pm, when the UV radiation levels are at their highest.

It is important to balance sun protection with safe sun exposure for the production of vitamin D for bone growth and development. During May to August, at times when the UV radiation level is below 3, sun protection for most people is not necessary.

## Aims

The aims of the ‘\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School skin protection policy’ are to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in our school to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

## Implementation

This policy is for implementation from 1 September to 30 April. Outside of this time care should also be taken when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our primary school, including Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the sun.

It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of \_\_\_\_\_ Primary School, inclusive of the Out of School Hours Care Program (where applicable) will use the following skin protection strategies:

- 1 Take particular care if in the sun between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm and when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above, outside of these times.
  - 1.1 Where possible, outdoor activity sessions will be held in shaded areas.
  - 1.2 Whenever possible, all outdoor activities, including Vacation Care programs (where applicable), will be scheduled before 10 am and after 3 pm, conducted indoors, or in the shaded areas of the school.
- 2 Use the shade of trees, pergolas, umbrellas and tents whenever outdoors.
  - 2.1 Tree planting will be organised at the school.
  - 2.2 The sandpit and play equipment area to be a priority for shade structure planning.
  - 2.3 The further provision of shaded areas will appear as a priority on any forward planning documents for the school.
- 3 Wear appropriate clothing that protects the skin.
  - 3.1 Students, staff and parents will be expected to wear an approved broad brimmed hat, legionnaire style hat, or a bucket hat whenever they are involved in outside activities. Children not wearing an appropriate hat will be expected to play in the shade.
  - 3.2 Students will be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and at least elbow length sleeves, longer style shorts/skirts and rash vests or t-shirts for swimming, if using an outside pool.
  - 3.3 Students attending Vacation Care programs at the school will be instructed to wear clothing that protects the skin (no singlet or midriff tops) and appropriate hats (no baseball caps or visors). Parents are to be advised of this prior to the program commencing.

- 4 Students will be encouraged to apply a broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ to clean, dry skin, 15–20 minutes before going outdoors for lunch or curriculum activities. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time (i.e. sports days, excursions, camp), or more frequently if involved in water activities or perspiring.
  - 4.1 Adequate time must be allowed for students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.
  - 4.2 Parents will be encouraged to supply sunscreen for their children, although there will be bulk sunscreen packs available in all classrooms.
  - 4.3 Sunscreen application will be encouraged before going out to lunch or any outdoor activity between 10 am and 3 pm.
- 5 Reinforcing the SunSmart message in all school activities and in general school procedures is an important strategy in the adoption of the skin protection behaviours.
  - 5.1 Staff will be encouraged to routinely role model appropriate SunSmart strategies in all school activities.
  - 5.2 Skin cancer prevention will be included in the curriculum at each year level.
  - 5.3 Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with Cancer Council SA
  - 5.4 Information about the school's SunSmart Policy will be given to all new staff, students and families.
- 6 The '\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School skin protection policy' will be reviewed on a two yearly basis with staff, SRC, OSHC and School Council input.
  - 6.1 Policy issues will be discussed at staff, SRC, OSHC and school council.

For more information please don't hesitate to contact:

**Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20**

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Or visit our website on:

[www.sunsmart.org.au](http://www.sunsmart.org.au)

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