SunSmart secondary school policy guidelines
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Originally developed by the National Skin Cancer Steering Committee Secondary Schools Working Group on behalf of Cancer Council Australia

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Why schools should be concerned about ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will get skin cancer before the age of 70 and over 2,000 Australians die from skin cancer each year.

Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer later in life. Skin damage is permanent and irreversible and increases with each exposure. Because of this, sun protection strategies should be an essential part of the Australian way of life.

Schools have the potential to reduce students’ UV exposure and future risk of developing skin cancer for the following reasons:

- the crucial period for sustaining damaging levels of UV exposure occurs during the school years
- students are at school during high-risk UV times five days a week
- schools in partnership with families and their communities can play a significant role in reducing exposure and changing behaviour through policy, education and role modelling.

School communities have a responsibility to implement skin cancer prevention strategies in the interests of student and staff health and wellbeing. Strategies must be practical in the context of the school’s environment and circumstances. It is best to begin with simple, achievable measures that can be readily implemented and gradually improved rather than attempt to do too much.

Many school systems have guidelines concerning exposure to UV radiation. It is recommended that these be considered in the development of your school community’s sun protection plan or policy.

Cancer Council SA recommends that all schools implement a comprehensive sun protection policy when UV levels are 3 and above. For most of South Australia these are the months of September through to the end of April.

Ultraviolet radiation

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the form of solar radiation that causes skin damage. Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage (e.g. wrinkles, blotches and other signs of ageing), eye damage and skin cancer.

UV radiation can’t be seen or felt and is determined by the angle of the sun to the earth’s surface which changes during the year. UV levels peak over the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead and can be of extreme levels on a day of 40°C or a day of 21°C, depending on the time of year.

UV radiation does not feel warm and cannot be seen, but can cause skin damage even on cool and overcast days, so clear skies or high temperatures can’t be used to determine when sun protection is needed.

UV levels are divided into low (1–2), moderate (3–5), high (6–7), very high (8–10) and extreme (11 and above). This is based on the Global Solar UV Index (UVI), a rating system adopted from the World Health Organization.

A UV level of 3 is high enough to cause skin damage to unprotected skin, therefore it is important to protect skin when the UV level is 3 and above. The higher the UV level—the greater the potential for damage to your skin.

Cancer Council SA recommend that all schools implement a comprehensive sun protection policy when UV levels are 3 and above—which, for most of South Australia, are the months of September through to the end of April.
About the SunSmart UV Alert

The SunSmart UV Alert is a tool that indicates the hours when sun protection is needed on any given day (e.g. 8:15 am to 4:20 pm).

The SunSmart UV Alert times are issued daily by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) when the UV Index is forecast to reach 3 or above. When a SunSmart UV Alert is issued—sun protection measures are recommended during the times indicated.

Sun exposure and vitamin D

A balance between sun protection to lower the risk of skin cancer, and sun exposure for the production and maintenance of vitamin D is important for good health.

Current information indicates that at certain times of the year, when the UV level is below 3, it is safe for the general population to leave hats and sunscreen off to ensure vitamin D levels are maintained. Sun protection may still be required if spending time in alpine regions, around reflective surfaces or prolonged periods outdoors.

For the majority of the population, incidental sunlight exposure during normal daily activities is enough to maintain vitamin D levels. Current recommendations are that during summer most people need only a few minutes of sun exposure (either side of peak UV times) to their face, arms and hands to achieve adequate vitamin D levels. During winter, two to three hours of sun exposure to the face, arms and hands over a week is recommended. People with naturally very dark skin require more sun exposure to maintain vitamin D levels. People concerned about their own vitamin D levels should discuss it with their GP.

More information:
How much sun is enough?

Legal issues in relation to UV radiation

Duty of care for students

In general, duty of care refers to the need to protect students against foreseeable harm. Sunburn is a foreseeable outcome of overexposure to the sun, and there is now considerable evidence linking UV exposure, particularly during childhood and adolescence, to the development of skin cancer. It should also be remembered that skin damage may occur without any sign of sunburn.

Every teacher has a ‘duty of care’ towards every student under his or her supervision, by virtue of the conditions of the teacher’s employment, and by virtue of the common law principles of negligence.

Generally speaking a teacher owes a student a duty to take reasonable care to protect him or her from foreseeable risk of injury.
This duty may be manifested in many ways including:

- the duty to supervise the students so that they comply with rules and practices designed for their own safety and that of other students;
- the duty to design and implement appropriate programs and procedures to ensure the safety of students;
- the duty to ensure that school buildings, equipment and facilities are safe;
- the duty to warn students about dangerous situations or practices.

Any activity that involves students being outdoors for any period of time should be seen as potentially placing them at risk of sunburn and other skin damage, and subsequent skin cancer.

Legal action has occurred in some states as a result of students being sunburnt during school organised activities, particularly all-day events such as swimming carnivals and excursions.

More information:
DECD (SA) Duty of care policy

Work health and safety

Exposure to UV radiation has been recognised as an accepted occupational hazard for people who spend all or part of their working day outside. South Australian work health and safety (WHS) legislation requires employers to ensure that employees can work safely without risk to their health. This includes overexposure to UV radiation.

A useful reference document is ‘Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) 2013’ from Safe Work Australia

It includes information in relation to outdoor workers about:
- adverse health effects of solar ultraviolet radiation
- employer and employee responsibilities
- developing a UV protection program
  ○ risk assessment
  ○ UV radiation control measures
  ○ education and training programs
  ○ developing a policy
  ○ monitor compliance and review the program.

More information:
DECD (SA) UV radiation/sun protection procedure for employees

Risk management

UV radiation is a risk factor that requires attention in a risk management policy. In South Australia, DECD policy provides an effective structure and guidance for the management of risk across the Department for Education and Child Development. This covers all types of risk including the safety and well-being of students, children, staff, contractors and volunteers. Other organisations may also have risk management policies.

More information:
DECD (SA) Risk Management Policy
A policy or plan?

Implementation of an effective sun protection policy or plan enables school communities to minimise the danger of excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation for students and staff.

If this is your first attempt at tackling a sun protection policy, your school may choose to develop a plan that can be implemented in stages, rather than immediately introducing a comprehensive policy. Schools that already have a range of strategies in place may prefer to proceed with policy development. This may involve documenting existing measures, introducing new measures, or both.

Try to involve representatives from all sectors of the school community, including students—it is important that everyone has the opportunity for input if you are to secure support for your strategies. A key element of the planning process is an education campaign to inform the school community of what you are trying to achieve and why. Cancer Council SA are able to supply materials such as posters, curriculum resources and fact sheets.

Once your policy or plan is complete, promote it through your school newsletter and publish it where it is readily accessible for everyone—student diaries and handbooks, staff handbooks etc. Ensure new staff members, students and parents understand what is expected and reinforce the message through regular reminders in newsletters, meetings and assemblies, especially at the beginning of each term and, in particular, beginning of policy implementation dates.

The framework and tip sheets that follow are intended to assist you in developing a policy or plan to minimise UV exposure for members of your school community. They could be used as an activity for a staff or committee meeting or as the basis for a professional development session.

Schools are welcome to copy this SunSmart policy directly and use it as their own.

Please note: To comply with SunSmart guidelines, ensure your policy states sun protection is used from 1 September to 30 April and whenever UV levels reach 3 or above at other times and NOT just during terms one and four. Only using sun protection during these terms means children and staff are not protected from UV when they need to be.

< School>’s SUNSMART policy

This policy applies to all school events on and off-site.

Rationale

A balance of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun’s UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Sun exposure in childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

Objectives

This SunSmart Policy has been developed to:

- 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 at appropriate times
- ensure all students and staff have some UV exposure for vitamin D
- assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection
- ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school’s SunSmart policy.

Staff are encouraged to access the SunSmart UV Alert at www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart to find out daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

The school uses a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities from 1 September to 30 April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above at other times.

1. Clothing (see Tips for implementing—E)

Sun protective clothing is included in the school uniform/dress code and sports uniform. The clothing is cool, loose fitting and made of closely woven fabric. It includes shirts with collars and elbow length sleeves, longer-style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.
2. Sunscreen (see Tips for implementing—F)

- Students must provide their own SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen. This is included on the school’s booklist each year.

AND / OR

- The school supplies SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for staff and student’s use.
- Sunscreen is applied at least twenty minutes before going outdoors (where possible) and reapplied every two hours if outdoors for an extended period.
- Strategies are in place to remind students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors and reapply as required e.g. reminder notices, sunscreen monitors, sunscreen buddies.
- With parental consent, students with naturally very dark skin are not required to wear sunscreen to help with vitamin D requirements.

3. Hats (see Tips for implementing—E)

All students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears e.g. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hats, whenever they are outside. Baseball or peak caps are not acceptable.

4. Shade (see Tips for implementing—A)

- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- The school governing council makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds, particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch areas, canteen and outdoor lesson areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities.
- In consultation with the school governing council, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Students who do not have appropriate hats or clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

5. Sunglasses [optional] (see Tips for implementing—E)

Students and staff are encouraged to wear close-fitting, wraparound sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067:2003 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

Staff WHS and role modelling (see Tips for implementing—E)

As part of WHS UV risk controls and rolemodelling, when the UV is 3 and above staff will:
- wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
- apply SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible.

Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures e.g. sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade, when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

Curriculum (see Tips for implementing—D)

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

Policy review

The school council and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required.

Date of next policy review: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Relevant resources – available from www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart

- **SunSmart UV Alert**: shows you when the UV is forecast to be 3 or above and when skin protection is required. It is available on the free SunSmart app (www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart-apps), online (www.bom.gov.au/sa/uv), in the weather section of some newspapers or as a free widget to place on your website (www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart-apps).

- **Creating effective shade**: online shade audit tool allows you to assess whether your existing shade is adequate. It also helps you develop a list of practical recommendations to improve both built and natural shade (www.sunsmart.com.au/uv-sun-protection/seek-shade).

- **Real Stories**: educational resource for year 7–10 students including a series of videos and lessons examining the issues related to young people and skin cancer (www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart).


**Monitoring and evaluating your policy or plan**

Below is a framework that could be used to monitor and evaluate your sun protection policy or plan, including examples of objectives and strategies. We suggest that you regularly assess your objectives and strategies and make changes if necessary.

**Objectives**

**Examples—existing objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the community at appropriate times.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully, partially or not achieved</td>
<td>Partially achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Trees planted on perimeter of school oval to provide shade for spectators. Temporary shade to be hired for events until trees grow. More shade required for canteen area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New/revised objectives:

- ___________________________________________
- ___________________________________________
- ___________________________________________

**Implementation**

**Examples—existing strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluate design of clothing currently worn to school and for physical education/sports activities and consider changes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully, partially or not achieved</td>
<td>Partially implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Students are now required to wear polo shirts with elbow-length sleeves during physical education/sport lessons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New/revised strategies:

- From term 1 next year, a SunSmart hat will be required for outdoor lessons.
- ___________________________________________
- ___________________________________________
A. Shade

Shade is the key element of a school’s sun protection strategy. Effective shade can reduce ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure by approximately 75%. The school development plan should aim to increase the amount of shade available in the school. Consult with the facilities or grounds committee to develop long-term shade strategies for the school grounds. Consider temporary shade structures as a short-term measure.

It is recommended that existing shade is assessed before planning additional shade and that a list of priorities be developed. A shade audit will help determine what shade is currently available, whether it provides effective sun protection and whether better use can be made of existing shade. A shade audit will also indicate if additional shade is required, where it should be located and how it can best be created.

Shade should be established in high-risk areas first. Shade should also be considered when planning outdoor events, whether held on the school grounds or at external venues.

Shade priority

Shade is required for outdoor areas where members of your school community congregate, but some areas will have a higher priority than others. You should focus on:

- areas where outdoor activities are likely to occur, or that students use during breaks between 10 am and 3 pm
- areas where outdoor activities occur and/or where people are likely to be watching outdoor activities for more than ten minutes.

Assessing your shade

- Using a site plan, mark where shade is available at peak UV times and mark areas where students congregate. Compare the two and on the basis of this comparison, develop a list of priorities for change.

Some strategies for increasing shade at your school could include:

- maximise existing shade e.g. verandahs, covered walkways and covered canteen areas, by encouraging student use during breaks
- allow students to eat lunch indoors if shade in school grounds is inadequate
- plant trees, particularly near ovals and other activity areas
- plant trees in clusters to increase the shade area
- prune low-hanging branches from trees to allow access
- relocate garden beds that are in shaded areas
- build seating around trees
- move seats and tables to areas of shade
- erect portable shelters in exposed areas
- hire shade structures for large outdoor events
- conduct ‘club’ activities indoors during lunch and recess breaks
- ensure shaded areas are pleasant to sit in e.g. that they are grassed, clean of leaves and sticks or have seating, and that the gardener doesn’t water areas just before breaks.
**B. Organisation of outdoor lessons and breaks**

UV peaks between 10 am and 3 pm (when the sun is directly overhead). About 60% of the day’s UV radiation is received during this time. To reduce student and staff exposure to UV radiation, review timetables to minimise time spent in direct sun or outdoors during peak UV periods.

Possible strategies include:
- consider shorter lunchtimes and longer morning breaks
- make indoor venues available during lunch and morning break times
- timetable outdoor classes early in the morning where possible
- schedule physical education/sports activities to maximise use of indoor facilities during high-risk periods
- consider rescheduling sports so that indoor sports are conducted during peak summer times e.g. badminton in summer and softball/baseball in winter
- conduct outdoor assemblies early in the day
- plan fire drills etc early in the morning
- timetable lessons so the same class isn’t outdoors in peak time on consecutive days.

**C. All-day events**

Severe sunburn is likely when students are outside unprotected for long periods of time. The risk of skin damage on sports days and all-day excursions is high. Planning for outdoor events should incorporate a range of sun protection strategies.

- reschedule the event to minimise time outdoors during peak UV times if possible
- consider conducting twilight or indoor events, or early morning events over a couple of days
- consider conducting the event during the months when UV is lower (May to August).

You should also consider discussing how inter-school sporting arrangements can be improved with the relevant school sports associations.

Consider the following strategies.

Prior to the event:
- visit the venue to work out how much shade will be required
- organise portable shade structures—some local councils may hire or lend tents
- consider sharing the purchase of portable shade structures with neighbouring schools
- work out the best way to structure the day to maximise shade, given that it will move
- plan to provide plenty of sunscreen
- inform students, parents and staff that sun protection will be a priority and outline strategies to be undertaken
- encourage spectators to bring umbrellas or tents to supplement planned shade
- recommend that broad brimmed/bucket hats and long-sleeved clothing be worn by all spectators and participants when not competing
- promote a hat competition as part of the sports day
- promote house points or prizes for people covering up and encouraging others to do so
- remind participants to bring clothes so that they can cover up after they finish their events
• promote the sun protection message in all printed information about the day
• make SunSmart hats and clothing compulsory.

On the day:
• provide enough shade for spectators
• ensure shade is available where food and drinks are provided
• provide shade for the competitors at the marshalling areas
• provide shade for all officials where possible
• ensure students have shade while waiting for transport
• plan for the movement of shade during the day
• arrange for protective clothing to be taken to participants at the finish of events
• consider making hat wearing mandatory on the day for staff and students, except when competing
• encourage students, staff and parents to wear clothing that covers most of their skin
• consider including creative events to reinforce the sun protection message—conduct a mad hatter’s competition or a tug of war between teams wearing different styles of hats
• provide sunscreen at various locations
• assign students e.g. non-participants or members of the student representative body, to circulate with sunscreen
• give regular reminders about sun protection over the public address system.

D. Curriculum/school programs

It is important that environmental and behavioural elements of a sun protection policy are supported by education through curriculum programs. Students should not only understand how and why they need to protect their skin, but also have the opportunity to explore related issues, such as self image, peer pressure, fashion, culture and the media—all of which influence decision making in relation to ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure.

Activities relating to sun safety can be incorporated into a number of different areas of the curriculum, and may have quite different objectives, depending on the ages and needs of your students—and the stage your school has reached in the development of its policy or plan.

Visit Cancer Council SA www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart to view resources that are available to secondary schools.

The final section of this resource ‘Curriculum Activity Ideas’ (page 16) lists some activities that teachers can use according to interests, time available, student background, curriculum area and year level.

E. Clothing, hats and sunglasses

Clothing

One of the most effective barriers between skin and the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation is clothing. The overall protection provided by clothing will depend on both the material and the design. Clothing should also cover as much skin as possible. Dark colours block more UV radiation and hence give more protection than light colours, however they may be hotter to wear.

Uniforms should include collars, longer sleeves and longer length shorts/skirts. Three quarter length shirts will offer more protection to the arms.

The ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating is used to rate the level of protection provided by fabric. A material’s UPF is based on how much ultraviolet radiation is transmitted through the material. The higher the rating the greater the protection provided.

Ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection category</th>
<th>UPF range</th>
<th>% UV blocked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent protection</td>
<td>40 to 50, 50+</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good protection</td>
<td>25 to 39</td>
<td>95.9 to 97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good protection</td>
<td>15 to 24</td>
<td>93.3 to 95.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Fabrics that do not carry a UPF rating do not necessarily offer less protection. It just means they haven’t been independently tested for sun protection.

Keeping cool is also important. Source fabrics that are lightweight and cool, yet still provide maximum sun protection. In the heat it is important that
garments draw perspiration away from the body to help the body stay cool.

The closer the fabric’s weave, the higher the UV radiation protection. Because fibres of tightly woven fabrics are closer together, less UV radiation is able to pass through to the skin.

Hats

Common sites of skin damage and skin cancer are the neck, ears, temples, lips, face and nose. These areas are constantly exposed to the sun and generally receive more UV radiation exposure than other parts of the body. Wearing an appropriate hat is one way to protect these sensitive areas.

Schools have succeeded in making hat-wearing an accepted part of school life by making clear school rules about uniform dress code, which are supported by senior management and all staff, which students are expected to follow.

A broad brimmed or bucket hat offers the best protection for the head, neck and ears. Cancer Council SA does not recommend baseball caps and visors as they do not offer adequate protection to the back of the neck and ears.

Possible strategies in relation to clothing and hats include:

- modify the school uniform design or dress code to increase the amount of sun protection it provides
- consider allowing the winter uniform (or at least long pants) to be worn during summer
- choose school uniform material with the highest possible UPF rating
- encourage students attending swimming carnivals/classes to wear T-shirts or lycra protective shirts (rash tops/rashies) over bathers and have a dry shirt to wear when out of the water
- require sun protective clothing, including hats, for all camps and excursions
- require sun protective clothing, including hats, for physical education and sport
- involve students in the design of an appropriate school hat and clothing
- accept the wearing of ‘brand named’ (e.g. surf style) broad brimmed/bucket hats
- allow students to wear their own sun protective hats e.g. ‘Akubra’
- consider offering a choice of hat colours and styles
- subsidise the cost of hats
- offer spot prizes for hat wearers
- explore ways of giving hat wearing a positive image
- recruit influential students to act as role models—offer incentives if necessary
- ensure staff act as role models by wearing appropriate hats and clothing.

Sunglasses

Like skin, eyes can be damaged by UV. When worn with a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses can reduce the amount of UV reaching the eyes by up to 98% (compared with a reduction of about 50% for sunglasses alone).

If students are encouraged to wear sunglasses, please note the following:
• to provide protection from UV, sunglasses should conform with Australian Standard AS/NZS1067:2003. The standard relates only to the amount of UV passing through the lens.

• sunglasses should be a close-fitting, wraparound style, to reduce the amount of UV reaching the eyes around the edges of the lens.

F. Sunscreen

A sunscreen works by reducing the amount of UV radiation reaching exposed skin. This means that sunscreen does not totally block UV radiation from reaching the skin. No sunscreen gives complete protection, so it must be used in combination with other sun protection strategies. Sunscreen should never be used to deliberately increase the time spent in the sun.

The sun does not need to feel hot to damage skin and eyes. The damage is caused by UV which is not seen or felt.

Applying sunscreen correctly

Sunscreen must be applied correctly to be effective by:

• allowing students to apply sunscreen at least twenty minutes before going outside

• applying evenly and generously—about one teaspoonful for each arm and leg and a half teaspoonful for the face, neck and ears

• reapplying every two hours—more often if the skin is wiped, washed or sweaty

• never using sunscreen to extend time in the sun

• not forgetting your feet if they are exposed

• always using sunscreen in combination with other sun protection strategies.

Labelling

Sun protection factor (SPF) is a measure of the level of protection a sunscreen provides against sunburn. The higher the SPF, the more protection a sunscreen provides. The maximum SPF for sunscreens sold in Australia is 50+. A sunscreen product can only be labelled with a SPF number when it complies with the Australian/New Zealand standard. Cancer Council Australia recommends the use of SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

Broad spectrum means the sunscreen provides protection against the two types of UV radiation that reach the earth’s surface (UVA and UVB).

Strategies to increase sunscreen use:

• provide pump packs at various publicised points around the school with posters outlining correct application and emphasising the need for other sun protection methods

• place sunscreen on the booklist

• encourage parents to provide each student with their own sunscreen

• provide sunscreen for all outdoor lessons

• investigate whether parents’ groups can fund the provision of sunscreen

• recommend that students wear sunscreen to school and remind parents through newsletters

• remind students to apply sunscreen before outdoor events/activities

• investigate selling sunscreen as a school fundraiser

• Cancer Council SA provides schools with sunscreens at discounted prices.

Note: If you supply sunscreen, it is recommended that you inform parents of the brand and type, so that if it does not suit students’ skin, an alternative can be provided by parents.

G. Risk management for staff

Workplace UV exposure is a hazard for any employee required to spend all or part of their day outdoors (see ‘Legal issues in relation to UV exposure’). All staff are at risk during yard duty and outdoor events. Physical education, sport and outdoor education teachers and ground staff are at particular risk. Identify duties that involve exposure to UV radiation, for example, outdoor classes, yard duty, sporting carnivals, grounds keeping - and the times of day, the duration and frequency of these tasks.

Some possible strategies to reduce staff risk include:
• conduct an education program for staff at a staff meeting or professional development session. Cancer Council SA is able to offer speakers to present relevant SunSmart information.

• repeat the education program at appropriate intervals

• review the education program at appropriate intervals

• ensure that new staff are informed about UV risk reduction strategies

• include information in staff handbooks

• strongly encourage staff to keep a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses and a long-sleeved shirt at school for use during outdoor duties

• provide all staff with a broad brimmed hat

• encourage those staff who do not wish to wear a hat to use an umbrella instead

• make umbrellas available in the staff room

• subsidise the purchase of broad brimmed hats of their own choice for all staff

• encourage staff to wear clothing that protects as much of their bodies as possible e.g. tops/shirts/dresses that cover the shoulders and longer skirts/shorts, particularly for outdoor events

• emphasise the importance of staff acting as role models for students in reducing sun exposure

• educate staff about the correct use of sunscreen, including the meaning of SPF factors, correct application and the need for reapplication, and its use in conjunction with other UV risk reduction strategies

• keep WHS issues and awareness high on your school’s agenda.
The activities listed below are ideas that can be developed further and adapted according to objectives, time available, student interests and abilities.

To raise student awareness about sun protection at school and elsewhere:

- Each student records their own activities over a week; assesses when and where they are at risk of sun damage; the kinds of activities they are involved in at the time; current risk reduction strategies (if any) and possible risk reduction strategies.

- Discuss issues relating to sun protection in different situations. Which factors influence the decisions to protect/not protect themselves from the sun? Do these factors vary according to different circumstances?

- Develop a sun protection plan for an event such as a sporting carnival, fete, excursion or camp. This may include making suggestions about timing of activities, appropriate dress, temporary shade and strategies to encourage spectators to be protected from the sun.

- Develop a quiz for other members of the school community e.g. parents and younger students, to assess their knowledge of sun protection. It should include correct answers and an appropriate scoring system.

To assess and improve the availability of attractive shaded areas within the school grounds:

- Conduct observational studies of the areas where students congregate at peak UV periods, particularly lunchtime. Students would need to draw a map of the school grounds, and consider questions such as how many students use shade, which shaded areas are most/least used, what students out in the sun are doing etc. These studies would need to be repeated at different times during the lunch break and on different days.

- Survey the student population in relation to current shade availability and possible improvements. E.g. do they use current shaded areas? Why/not? Where do they believe new shaded areas should be created? What kinds of areas should they be? Develop a proposal for shaded areas according to usage patterns identified by the study. Students may be also able to design shade appropriate for the area.

To raise the awareness of the wider school community about sun protection:

- Develop an education campaign for a particular target group about a sun protection issue. This might be a general SunSmart campaign, or focus on a specific aspect of sun protection e.g:
  - the nature of UV e.g. peak times, the fact that UV radiation can’t be seen or felt and is not related to temperature, effect of UV on the skin etc and the implications of this for prevention strategies
  - appropriate use of sunscreen: e.g. correct application and reapplication, meaning of terms such as SPF, broad spectrum and water-resistant and the appropriate role of sunscreen in reducing risk of overexposure to UV
  - skin cancer and other damage resulting from exposure to UV: e.g. why and how UV causes this damage, statistics, types of skin cancer and other damage
  - the importance of early detection: e.g. how to check the skin and what to look for, what to do if concerned about a spot, etc.

To encourage responsible decision-making by students to reduce their risk of skin damage:

- Students role play, in pairs, one of the following roles (then swap and play the other):
  - person A: Invite your friend to the beach, river or pool to see who is there and work on his/her tan. Your friend is new to the area and you try to convince him/her that a tan is essential to be part of the group

Conduct a sunscreen survey to assess:

- how many students have access to sunscreen
- whether they are using it
- whether they know where to find it within the school
- whether they know how to apply it correctly.
person B: You are new to the area and want to meet more people your age. You have skin that burns easily and have doubts about accepting your friend’s invitation.

- As a class, discuss how students felt in each of the two roles. Questions for discussion might include:
  - were you able to resist your friend’s invitation, and if so, how did you feel?
  - what tactics did your friend use to attempt to persuade you, and how did those tactics make you feel?
  - what are the reasons for and against accepting the invitation? Which reasons are most important? Why? Would those reasons always be the most important?
  - how did you feel while you were trying to persuade your friend to accept the invitation?
  - what could you do to help your friend meet people without placing them in this position?
  - what strategies could be used by person B to make friends without compromising his/her health?

- Create and conduct other role plays like the one above, but using different scenarios related to sun protection e.g. hat wearing, sunscreen use, minimising time in the sun during the peak UV periods.

- Ask students to brainstorm as many behaviours as they can that reduce the risk of skin damage due to sun exposure.

As a class, discuss these strategies—which are most likely to be effective?

- Develop a series of Dear Doctor (or similar) letters describing scenarios relating to sun protection, and ask students to develop responses. Scenarios could include:
  - My boyfriend/girlfriend thinks I look better with a tan. I know I should wear a hat but my friends give me a hard time when I do.
  - Our tennis matches are always scheduled for the middle of the day and I burn easily.
  - Our local swimming pool has no shade. Alternatively, students can develop their own scenarios and swap them with a partner—then respond to the scenario developed by their partner.

To encourage students to be pro-active in identifying sources of UV exposure and develop strategies to reduce risk:

- students choose a local facility at which outdoor activities are conducted and:
  - make an assessment of when and under what circumstances users of that facility are at risk of excessive UV exposure
  - develop some strategies to reduce sun damage for users that could be implemented by the management of the facility
  - develop some recommendations for strategies that could be employed by users of the facility.

This might involve finding out who uses the facility and when, and visits to the facility at different times to assess shade availability. It could be done in small groups, with different groups allocated to specific tasks.

More information
For more curriculum ideas visit Cancer Council SA www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart
Are you ready to join the SunSmart Program?

By joining Cancer Council’s National SunSmart Schools Program you receive a free aluminium sign to display on your fence, ongoing support from Cancer Council SA and access to free teacher PD and curriculum resources.

Visit [www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart](http://www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart) to join online. You will need to upload a copy of your sun protection policy. Use the checklist below to ensure your school’s policy meets the National SunSmart Schools Program criteria.

Sun protection policy review checklist for South Australian secondary schools

Please use this checklist to assist with writing and reviewing you sun protection policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The sun protection policy is in place from the beginning of September until the end of April and when the ultraviolet (UV) radiation level is 3 and above at other times. The policy is implemented at all school events and programs on and off-site and includes excursions, camps, sporting events etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students and staff wear a hat that gives good cover to the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside from beginning of September until the end of April and when the UV level is 3 and above outside of these times. Recommended are broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hats (bucket hats must have a deep crown and 6cm brim). Baseball caps are not allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate skin protective clothing is included in the school uniform/dress code. This includes shirts with collars, longer style shorts or dresses and the wearing of a rash vest or close fitting T-shirt over bathers for outdoor swimming activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care is taken during the peak UV radiation times and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times where possible. Sports days and other outdoor events to be held at twilight or during 2nd and 3rd terms where practical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A combination of sun protection measures are considered when planning outdoor events (camps, excursions, sporting activities, swimming carnivals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are actively encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who do not have appropriate hats with them are asked to remain in areas protected from the sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviours including wearing appropriate hat and skin protective clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses when outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is actively encouraged, with time for application of sunscreen allowed. Sunscreen is available in various locations around the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community (e.g. via newsletters, school homepage, morning bulletins, staff meetings, assemblies) and all families and staff members are informed of the policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of sunglasses that have an Eye Protection Factor (EPF) rating of 10 and meet the Australian Standards AS/NZ1067:2003 is encouraged where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school reviews its sun protection policy regularly (at least every three years) to ensure that the information remains current and relevant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For information and support on cancer and cancer-related issues, call Cancer Council. This is a free and confidential service available Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 5:30 pm

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