SUN SMART

POLICY
RATIONALE

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 750,000 Australians treated for skin cancer every year and over 2000 deaths recorded each year. Two in three people are treated for skin cancer by the age of 70.

There are four factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to these statistics:

1. The population is predominantly fair-skinned.
2. Ultraviolet light from the sun in sufficient intensity can induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
3. For most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
4. Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods.

Sun exposure has been identified as the major cause of skin cancer. Skin damage, including skin cancer is the result of cumulative exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Childhood and adolescence are critical periods when exposure to UV radiation is more likely to contribute to skin cancer in later life. Protecting the skin when the UV radiation level is 3 and above will lower the risk of skin cancer.

Schools can reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the school community to take effective skin protection measures. It is with this goal in mind that this policy has been developed.

AIMS

The aims of the Sun Smart Policy are to promote among children, staff and parents/caregivers:

1. Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
2. Lifestyle practices, which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
3. Personal responsibility for decision making about skin protection.
4. Awareness of the need for environmental changes in schools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is for implementation from 1st September- 30th April. Monitoring of the sun protection times (UV levels) will take place during May to August.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our school community are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.
When UV radiation levels are 3 and above, there are 5 ways to protect the skin (clothing, hats, sunscreen, shade and sunglasses).

- In cases where temperatures reach and exceed 36 C children will have inside play during lunch periods and shaded / verandah play during recess.
- Whenever possible outside activities will be scheduled earlier in the day or at times when UV radiation levels are lowest, conducted indoors or in the shaded areas of the school, if practical.
- Due to inclement weather during terms 2 and 3, St. Monica's will plan to hold Sports day late in Term 1, or the beginning of Term 4. There will be shade available and many reminders to wear hats and apply sunscreen.
- The library will be open for some lunchtime periods.

Use of shaded areas when UV is 3 and above.

- St. Monica's encourage children to play in shaded areas of verandahs, under tree canopies, sailed areas and to make use of any shade provided by trees/shrubs during playtimes.
- Staff and students will be reminded to make use of umbrellas during duties and/or excursions.

Wearing appropriate clothing which protects the skin

- Children are expected to wear a legionnaire style hat from 1 September to 30 April and when UV levels are 3 and above at other times when involved in outside school activities. Children not wearing hats will be asked to be seated in the shaded areas of the school.
- Adults will also be asked to wear similar protection. Umbrellas can be used to replace wearing of hat.
- From 1 September to 30 April or on days when UV levels are 3 and above, children will be reminded to wear hats when departing school at the end of the day.

- From 1 September to 30 April children should be encouraged to apply sunscreen before school and then again 15 minutes before going out to lunch. Staff will remind children to re-apply a broad spectrum SPF 30, or higher, prior to going outside at lunchtime.
- Children are encouraged to supply and apply their own sunscreen. This will avoid issues of allergies to particular products. Classrooms will have a back-up supply but students will need to be aware of any allergy potential.
Reinforcing the Sun Smart policy in classroom activities and in general school procedures are important strategies in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.

- Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate Sun Smart strategies in all school activities.
- Staff will be kept up to date with information and resources through the Cancer Council of South Australia materials.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to regularly check the Sun Smart UV level from the BOM website: A reading of less than 3 is considered safe while a reading of 3 and above is considered unsafe.

Vitamin D is important for musculoskeletal health. It is estimated that fair skinned people can achieve adequate vitamin D levels in summer from a few minutes of sunlight on either side of the peak UV periods on most days of the week. In winter, when UV levels are lower, 2-3 hours of sunlight exposure over a week may be required.

The Sun Smart policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and discussed at staff parent/caregiver meetings and the policy regularly reviewed by the School Board.

Curriculum

Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum for all year levels.

Sun Smart 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 on student enrolment.

Resources

www.cancersa.org.au/primary-schools

www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv

www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart-apps:
This is a free Sun Smart app that can also be download or a widget that you can put on school website which shows the daily sun protection times (ie when UV levels are 3 and above)