

SCHOOL POLICY: **SUN PROTECTION**
PUBLISHED: 2006
IDENTIFIER: SP200609

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Directorate has a duty of care to ensure that sun protection is provided for students while they are on school premises during school hours or undertaking school activities.
- 1.2 There is a shared responsibility between schools and parents/carers that the latter must acknowledge and accept.
- 1.3 This policy refers specifically to students. However, for their own protection, staff are also encouraged to follow this policy and guidelines developed by the school. Staff, in providing for their own protection, are also providing a role model for students.
- 1.4 Through the school's curriculum, students should be made aware of the damaging effects of ultraviolet radiation caused by exposure to the sun, and the need to protect their skin from high levels of radiation.
- 1.5 In meeting their sun protection duty of care objectives, schools are encouraged to become an accredited SunSmart school under the National SunSmart Schools Program.
- 1.6 Information about the National SunSmart Program can be obtained from the Cancer Council ACT.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 This policy aims to protect students, as far as reasonably practicable, from the dangers of exposure to the sun.
- 2.2 Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world - one out of two Australians will develop skin cancer. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation is a major contributory factor in the development of skin cancer.
- 2.3 Levels of ultraviolet radiation are particularly high in Canberra due to our altitude, clean air, and the number of hours of sunshine.
- 2.4 Ultraviolet radiation comes both from direct sunlight and "skylight" as it is scattered in the atmosphere. Ultraviolet radiation is also reflected from surrounding surfaces such as water, sand, concrete and snow. High levels of radiation are received in wide open areas, such as school ovals, even on a cloudy day.

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- 2.5 Ultraviolet radiation is high from September to April, peaking in December and January. The time of day when ultraviolet radiation is highest is 10.00 am to 2.00 pm (Eastern Standard Time) or 11.00 am to 3.00 pm (Daylight Saving Time), with 60 percent of the day's radiation occurring within that four hour period. Damage to children's skin can occur before and after these hours but it takes longer.
- 2.6 Most Australians receive the bulk of their Vitamin D supply from exposing their skin to small amounts of ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Due to low levels of ultraviolet radiation in Canberra during the winter months, The Cancer Council ACT does not recommend sun protection in June and July. This is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 *Parents/Carers*: people with parental responsibility and guardians.
- 3.2 *Duty of Care*: legal duty of care requires that teachers should take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of a school student under their care. This duty of care will arise whenever a student/teacher relationship exists.

4. Procedures

4.1 Local School Policy Development

- Each school must develop and adhere to sun protection guidelines that comply with this policy using Attachments A and B as guides. The information contained in these attachments is consistent with The Cancer Council ACT *SunSmart: Policy Guidelines for Schools to Reduce Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation*.
- Sun protection policies in schools must be developed in consultation with the school community and the School Board.
- Parents must be informed of the school's sun protection policy. This may be achieved by publishing the guidelines in the school handbook and school newsletters. Parents should also be informed that a full copy of the school's sun protection policy is available for inspection at the school.

4.2 Protective Clothing and Shade Provision

- When students are outside, schools must encourage them to wear SunSmart hats (eg broad-brimmed or legionnaire hats) that cover the face, ears and neck.
- Sunhat cords can become caught and become a strangulation risk to children playing on fixed playground equipment. Schools should recommend that parents either purchase sun hats with safety cords designed to break under minimal strain, or remove cords from sunhats altogether.
- When students are required to wear sunhats, schools should not permit them to access fixed play equipment unless one of the above hazard controls is met.

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- Schools must support the wearing of sun protective clothing. Loose fitting, closely woven cotton fabrics and shirts with a collar and longer sleeves and longer skirts and shorts are recommended.
- Where applicable these changes should be incorporated into the school dress code.
- All students should be encouraged to use the school's designated shade areas.
- School communities should seek to maintain and/or increase shade provision in school grounds.

4.3 Wearing of Sunscreen

- Schools should support the regular use of broad spectrum and water resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen on exposed skin that cannot be protected by clothing.
- Parents are encouraged to supply 30+ broad spectrum and water repellent sunscreen as part of their child's school equipment.
- Schools are encouraged to make sunscreen available for situations where students have not provided it, where they have forgotten it and at outdoor events.
- Where practicable students should be given opportunities to apply sunscreen 20 minutes prior to the lunch break and before participating in outdoor activities.
- Students should be encouraged to apply sunscreen themselves.
- Staff should exercise judgement as to whether some students, for example, young children, should be supervised when applying sunscreen.
- Teachers may not be able to assist every child to apply sunscreen and parents should be made aware of this.
- Schools should inform parents/carers at the beginning of the school year that there may be occasions when teachers will need to apply sunscreen to children. Parents/carers should be requested to inform the school if they do not wish teachers to apply sunscreen to their children.
- If a child is allergic to sunscreen, parents/carers must notify the school about this on the medical form completed at the beginning of each school year. Parents/carers have the option of providing a hypoallergenic sunscreen for their children.

4.4 Rescheduling Outdoor Activities

Minimise the time spent outdoors between 11am and 3pm (Daylight Saving Time) and 10am and 2pm (Eastern Standard Time). Some strategies might include:

- Timetabling outdoor physical activities, excursions and outdoor classes earlier in the day

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- Holding assemblies indoors, under shade or at lower ultraviolet times
- Making lunch times shorter and morning breaks longer
- Keeping students indoors or under shade at lunch times, until they have eaten their lunch.

4.5 Record Keeping

- A Sun Protection Guide, Attachment B, should be completed as part of the ongoing process of reviewing school policies.
- An Action Plan should be developed by schools and based on the results of the Sun Protection Guide.
- These records should be retained by each school.

5. Special Considerations

- 5.1 Preschools: Preschools should inform their communities at the beginning of the year that teachers will assist children to apply sunscreen.
- 5.2 Special Schools: Special Schools should inform their communities at the beginning of the year that teachers may need to apply sunscreen to students.
- 5.3 Secondary Schools: Secondary schools need to encourage and support students in the implementation of the individual school's sun protection policy.

Policy Owner: Director, Learning and Teaching

Related Policies: *Excursions - Policy and Mandatory Procedures*
Health, Physical Education and Sport - Policy and Guidelines
Outdoor Adventure Activities - Policy and Mandatory Procedures
First Aid

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ATTACHMENT A

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL SUN PROTECTION GUIDELINES

1. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist schools with possible inclusions in drafting their own Sun Protection guidelines.

2. Reason for Sun Protection

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun causes a number of short-term (acute) and long-term (chronic) effects.

Short term effects include sunburn and tanning. Sunburn occurs when skin blood vessels expand and leak fluid, causing inflammation, pain and redness. Sunburn symptoms can continue to develop for 24 to 72 hours after ultraviolet radiation exposure. Tanning occurs when skin cells produce a pigment called melanin in response to ultraviolet radiation exposure.

Long term effects of ultraviolet radiation include accelerated skin aging and skin cancer. Sunburn and tanning during childhood and adolescence both increase the risk of melanoma skin cancer in later life.

3. Procedures

Section 4 of the Sun Protection Policy requires each school to develop sun protection guidelines consistent with the content of this policy.

4. Developing Sun Protection Guidelines

Ideally, parents, staff and students should work together to develop sun protection guidelines.

5. Purpose of Sun Protection Guidelines

School guidelines can assist to:

- increase student and school community awareness of skin cancer and practical means of protection
- develop strategies that encourage responsible decision-making about skin protection
- encourage students and staff to wear protective clothing and hats for outdoor activities particularly at high risk times such as during outdoor sport, lunchtimes, and during school camps and trips
- work towards a school environment which provides shade for students and staff.

More specific purposes may need to be developed depending on the sun protection objectives of a school.

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6. Hats and Clothing

More people are sunburned around the head and face than any other part of the body.

- The dress code or school uniform should include shirts with a collar and longer sleeves, longer skirts and shorts and hats that shade the face, ears and neck. Hats should have an 8 – 10 cm wide brim or flap.
- Schools should encourage the wearing of protective clothing by all members of the school community including staff and parents assisting at outdoor functions.

7. Information on Sunscreen Use

- Apply broad spectrum sunscreens with an SPF rating of 30+ on skin that cannot be protected by clothing – particularly the face, ears and neck and the backs of the hands and lower arms.
- For maximum protection, apply sunscreen to clean, dry skin 20 minutes before going into the sun.
- Apply water resistant sunscreens where there is any chance of the cream being washed off the body, eg during outside sports activities and swimming.
- Re-apply sunscreen every two hours when remaining outdoors for extended periods of time.
- Ensure that “use by” dates on sunscreens have not passed.

8. Sunglasses

If students wish to wear sunglasses the following advice can assist in purchasing those that provide adequate protection from the sun:

- Wraparound sunglasses are tinted to protect against ultraviolet light penetration and glare at the front and sides of the face.
- Sunglasses should meet the Australian Standard for ultraviolet protection. These are labelled AS 1067.

9. School Curriculum

- Sun protection education should be included in the curriculum.
- The Cancer Council ACT has all relevant educational materials to assist schools with curricula content.

10. Environment

A grounds policy could include:

- assessing school grounds for shade.

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- planting trees or providing alternative shade.
- considering shade provision in future development of school grounds.

11. Role Modelling

Staff can act as role models to students and parents by:

- wearing appropriate hats and clothing in the sun, particularly on playground duty and during sporting and excursion activities
- applying broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen on exposed skin.

12. Maintaining Momentum

Parents, staff and students could consider:

- reviewing ongoing guidelines
- promotional events
- awareness raising within the school
- ideas for inclusion in the curriculum
- raising finance for shade structures
- a tree planting program.

13. Evaluation

Ongoing annual evaluation could include:

- reviewing curriculum inclusions
- assessment of shade provision
- reviewing the SunSmart behaviour of students and staff.

14. Obtaining SunSmart Accreditation

- Schools are encouraged to become accredited SunSmart schools under the National SunSmart Program
- Accreditation shows communities that schools are committed to the future health of their students. Information about attaining school accreditation can be obtained from the Cancer Council ACT.

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ATTACHMENT B

SUN PROTECTION ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Name of School:.....Date Completed:.....

	Y	N
Does your school have current Sun Protection Guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the Guidelines based on the requirements of the Directorate's Sun Protection Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the Guidelines been ratified by the School Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the Guidelines been developed by school staff, students and parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your Sun Protection Guidelines incorporate: Clear purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SunSmart accreditation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun protection education in the curriculum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student wearing of sunglasses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student hat wearing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun protective clothing/uniforms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers, staff and parents wearing hats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of sunscreen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of shade?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimising time spent outside during peak ultraviolet periods?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reinforcement of the SunSmart message? (e.g. newsletters, assemblies etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A monitoring/evaluation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the existing Guidelines in need of review?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the school's guidelines been communicated to students and parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SunSmart School Accreditation

- Does your school have SunSmart Accreditation?
- If so, have students and parents been consulted?
- If not, would SunSmart Accreditation have value for your school?

Behaviour

- Do your students wear legionnaire or broad-brimmed hats between September and April?
- Is hat wearing enforced?
- On a typical day at your school, would nearly all students be wearing hats?
- For students not wearing hats outside, are they required to remain in the shade?
- Do your students wear:
- shirts with collars?
 - shirts with elbow-length sleeves?
 - longer-style shorts/skirts?
 - rash vests for outdoor swimming?
- Does your school actively encourage teachers/staff to wear SunSmart hats while outside?
- Does your school actively encourage parents to wear SunSmart hats at outdoor activities?
- Is sunscreen available to students in all classrooms?
- Are parents encouraged to supply their children with sunscreen?
- Is sunscreen available for student use during PE, sports days and excursions?
- Are children encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen?
- Is time given for the application of sunscreen before the lunch break?

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Curriculum

- Has your school sought sun protection material to be included in the school curriculum?
- Is SunSmart education incorporated into the curriculum of all year levels?
- Does your school use student assemblies to encourage the use of sun protection?
- Does your school hold assemblies outside the peak ultraviolet time i.e. (10am – 2pm AEST & 11am – 3pm DST) or indoors or under shade?
- Does your school reschedule activities such as PE classes, sports carnivals and outdoor excursions to be outside the peak ultraviolet time?
- Does your school have an extended recess and shortened lunch break?
- Is lunch eaten inside or in special shaded areas?
- Does your school have whole school activities such as SunSmart days, tree planting etc?

Environment

- Does your school have sufficient existing shade or have plans to increase available shade?

I certify that the responses provided in carrying out this Sun Protection Assessment Guide are true and correct and improvements needed will form the basis of the school's Sun Protection Action Plan.

Signed:.....

School Principal

Date:.....

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