

SUNSMART POLICY

RATIONALE

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 160 000 new cases and 1,200 deaths recorded each year.

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

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

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Much of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature aging. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore preventable.

Primary Schools can help 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.

AIMS

The aims of the Sylvania Heights Public School SunSmart Policy are to promote among students, 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 schools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR SKIN PROTECTION

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students attending our school are protected, throughout the year, from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

1. As part of general skin-protection strategies:

- Students will wear hats which protect the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside eg sport, sports carnivals, outdoor excursions and activities.
- Students who do not have their hats with them will play in an area protected from the sun. A “No Hat -Play in the Shade” strategy will be established.
- Students will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities.
- Outdoor activities will be held in areas of shade whenever possible.
- Teachers will schedule outdoor activities from before 10am and after 2pm (11am and 3pm daylight saving time) whenever possible.
- Staff will be encouraged to act as role models by practising SunSmart behaviour:

- wearing protective hats and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities using a SPF 30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for skin protection seeking shade whenever possible.
- The school is committed to providing **shade** and planning for future shade needs – eg our “Big top” cola and 221 trees on our site.
- Use of sunscreen is encouraged and promoted and must be at least **SPF30+** broad-spectrum water-resistant
- Personal responsibility for and decision-making about skin protection Awareness of the need for environmental changes in schools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

2. Our school will:

- Ensure that school hats are appropriate and satisfy Cancer Council guidelines.
- Ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and outdoor events.
- Ensure that uniforms are protective, with collars and longer sleeves
- Provide more shelters and shade trees. (2 colas, Big Top shade shelter)
- Encourage and support the use of SPF 30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for staff and students.
- Limit exposure times through timetable changes, when possible.
- Incorporate programs on skin cancer prevention in its curriculum
- Reinforce regularly the SunSmart Policy in a positive way through newsletters, parent meetings, student and teacher activities

3. When enrolling a child, parents will be:

- Informed of the SunSmart Policy
- Requested to purchase a school hat
- Encouraged to provide SPF 30+, broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for their child’s use.
- Encouraged to act as positive role models and practise skin-protective behaviour themselves, particularly when attending school functions.