SunSmart Policy

Rationale
Our SunSmart policy has been developed to ensure that all students and staff attending this school are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. A healthy balance of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before they reach the age of 70. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer. Sun protection is needed whenever UV levels reach three and above. In Victoria average UV levels are three and above from the beginning of September to the end of April. During these months particular care should be taken during the middle of the day between 10am – 3pm when UV levels reach their peak. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D regulates calcium levels in the blood. It is also necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, muscles and teeth. From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three so sun protection isn't usually needed during these months unless in alpine regions or near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or water.

This policy is to be implemented throughout the year but with particular emphasis from the beginning of September to the end of April. To help maintain Vitamin D levels, sun protection measures are not used from May until August unless the UV Index level reaches 3 and above.

Objectives
The goals of our SunSmart Policy are to:
• Ensure that all children and staff maintain a healthy UV exposure balance.
• Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
• Encourage safe UV exposure whenever UV Index levels are below 3.
• Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for children, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
• Assist children to be responsible for their own sun protection.
• Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school’s SunSmart policy.

As part of general SunSmart strategies, our school will:

Behaviour
• Require children to wear broad-brimmed protective hats whenever they are outside (e.g. Recess, lunch, sport, excursions).
• Work with the parent community to encourage children to bring SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for use during the day.
• Encourage children to apply sunscreen before school and prior to the lunch break.
• Encourage children to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities.
• Request staff and parents to act as role models by practising SunSmart behaviours.
• Enforce our 'No hat, no play' policy by ensuring that children without broad-brimmed hats sit in the shade at recess and lunchtimes.

Curriculum
• Incorporate programs on skin cancer prevention into the curriculum at all grade levels.
• Regularly reinforce SunSmart behaviour in a positive way through newsletters, parent meetings, student and teacher activities.
• Ensure that the SunSmart policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events (e.g. camps, excursions, sporting events).
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Environment
- Provide sun protective clothing items as part of our school uniform.
- Schedule outdoor activities before 11.00am and after 3.00pm from the beginning of September to the end of April whenever possible.
- Organise outdoor activities to be held in areas with plenty of shade whenever possible.
- Schedule outdoor assemblies early in the day or in an area where all students can be in the shade.
- Work toward increasing the number of shelters and trees so as to provide adequate shade in the schoolgrounds.

Evaluation
The school staff and parents will review the effectiveness of this policy every two years. They will:
1. Review the SunSmart behaviour of students, staff, parents and visitors and make recommendations for improvement.
2. Assess shade provision and usage and make recommendations for increases in shade provision if necessary.
3. Update and promote curriculum material relevant to SunSmart activities.

Next Policy Review – 2010

Relevant Documents / Links
2. Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
4. Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC): Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight
5. SunSmart UV Alert (issued whenever the UV Index reaches 3 and above)