



## SunSmart School Policy



### **Rationale**

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Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. This is largely due to our climate, our proximity to the equator and our love of the great outdoors. Research indicates that childhood sun exposure is an important contributing factor to the development of skin cancer. As students are at school during times when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are highest, schools play a major role in minimising student's UV exposure and encouraging sun protective behaviours.

Our SunSmart policy has been adopted to ensure that all staff and children attending St. Benedict's School are protected from skin damage caused by UV radiation from the sun. This policy is to be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis from the beginning of September through to the end of May (terms 1 and 4). The sun protection practices outlined in this policy will be applied to all school activities, including sports carnivals, excursions and camps. The policy has been developed in consultation with the school community.

### **Our Commitment**

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#### *St. Benedict's will:*

- Inform parents of this SunSmart policy when they enrol their child/children.
- Provide education on skin cancer and prevention to Kindergarten, Pre-Primary and Year One, also at least two other year group via the health program.
- Promote sun protection via newsletters, assemblies, parent information evenings at the beginning of the year and staff meetings.
- Ensure there is adequate provision of shade within the school grounds for students and staff.
- Ensure staff, parents and guests are role modelling sun protective behaviour.
- Ensure sunscreen is readily available and accessible to staff
- Require staff and students wear broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats when outside.
- Direct children without a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hat to play in the undercover area, which is protected from the sun.
- Hat borrowing between students is not allowed but junior school classes may provide spare hats which are washed regularly.
- Require staff and students to wear a rash vest or shirt for swimming in outdoor pools (this may not be appropriate during competitive swimming).
- Regularly review the school dress code to ensure uniform includes sun protective items such as shirts with collars and longer sleeves, and rash vests for swimming.
- Encourage staff and students to use shaded or covered areas when outside.
- Ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and outdoor events.
- Encourage the use of SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen by:
  - providing sunscreen in the classroom.
  - Providing sunscreen at sport and physical education lessons

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- To help develop independent skills, junior school children are given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff, and are encouraged to do so.
- allowing students time to apply sunscreen prior to outdoor activities and re-application every two hours. Where possible, apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going outside.
- When children are involved in water activities, activities that involve large amounts of exertion and sweat, or activities where the child is likely to get large amounts of dirt/sand on their skin, sunscreen will be applied at least 15 minutes prior to going outside.
- Review the SunSmart policy every three years.
- Ensure updated information is passed on to the St. Benedict's community.  
<http://www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/sunsmart/>

## **Our Expectations**

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### *Parents/carers will:*

- Provide the standard SunSmart school hat for your child/children as per uniform guidelines and ensure that it is worn to and from school.
- During terms one and four the school recommends parents ensure children apply SPF 30+ or higher broad-spectrum sunscreen 20 minutes before leaving for school
- Supply sunscreen for their child if allergic/sensitive to school provided lotions
- Ensure that your child/children's clothing provides adequate protection from UV radiation on camps and excursions. The Cancer Council WA recommends the following:
  - collars and sleeves
  - closely woven fabric
  - rash vest or shirts for outdoor swimming.
- Act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour of sunscreen application, wearing of long sleeved shirts and broad brimmed hats.
- Support the school's SunSmart policy and help design and regularly update the policy.

### *Students will:*

- Be aware of the school's SunSmart policy.
- Take responsibility for their health by being SunSmart.
- Comply with SunSmart rules and guidelines by wearing suitable hats and clothing.
- Apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen before going outdoors, if needed.
- Use shaded or covered areas outdoors.
- Act as positive role models for other students in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour.
- Help design and regularly update the SunSmart policy.
- Participate in SunSmart education programs.

## Evaluation

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The SunSmart committee will review the effectiveness of this policy every three 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.
3. Update and promote curriculum material relevant to SunSmart activities.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

## Proposed Communication with Parents

The following communications schedule is proposed:

Term	Week	Communication
Enrolment Information		
	Week 4	Newsletter Insert – How to be SunSmart (5 ways)
	Week 6	Newsletter Insert – ‘Slip’ (on clothing)
	Week 8	‘Slop’ (on sunblock)
Term 2		Nil
Term 3		Nil
Term 4	Week 2	‘Slap’ (on a hat)
	Week 4	‘Slide’ (on sunglasses)
	Week 6	‘Seek’ (shade)
	Week 8	Sun Protection Myths

**The following are suggestions taken from Cancer Council that we could include in our newsletters.**

### How to be SunSmart (5 Ways)

Evidence suggests that childhood exposure to UV radiation contributes significantly to the development of skin cancer later in life. Our children are at school for 5 out of 7 periods of peak UV radiation per week and therefore it is crucial we educate and provide them with appropriate protection during school activities. The school would welcome any suggestions, feedback, experience or support that can help ensure we have addressed all the five ways of protecting ourselves from Skin Cancer in the School environment.

1 **Slip**: Sun protection clothing should be made from close weave fabric and maximise skin coverage

2 **Slop**: Sunscreen should be applied 15-30 minutes prior to going outside using a broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen and reapplied every two hours

3 **Slap**: An appropriate SunSmart hat is either a hat with a wide brim or a legionnaire style with a brim of 8-10 cm

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**4 Seek:** Adequate shade, both in the forms of shade structures and tree planting, should be available in outdoor areas.

**5 Slide:** Close fitting wrap-around sunglasses provide the best protection

## **SLOP**

### **Slip on Sun Protective Clothing**

Here are some helpful Sun protective clothing tips obtained from the Cancer Council.

Remember that Sun Protective clothing is just one of five ways to protect yourself and your family when the UV Index is above 3. SLIP on clothing, SLOP on sunscreen, SLAP on a hat, SEEK shade and SLIDE on sunnies.

#### **Tips for choosing and using clothing well**

One of the best barriers between your skin and the sun is clothing, so try to cover as much skin as possible. Not all clothing fabric is equal. Look for a swing tag with a high ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating to be sure.

When choosing clothing for sun protection, remember:

- long pants and shirts with a collar and long sleeves are best
- light weight, closely woven material with a UPF of 50+ provides more protection
- dark colours of the same material absorb more UV and are therefore more protective
- loose fitting clothing will be cooler in the heat.
- fabrics offer less protection when wet making the UPF rating of swimming costumes even more important. The Sun Smart Committee encourages parents to be prepared for school swimming lessons with appropriate swimming attire (make sure your child can put on/take off their bather and rash top easily).

## **SLOP**

### **Why use a Sunscreen?**

Severe sunburn in childhood increases the risk of melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer, later in life. It has been estimated that if everyone used SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen regularly, at least until the age of 18, the number of people getting melanoma could be reduced by over 70 per cent.

#### **Slop on SPF 30+ Sunscreen**

Sunscreen should not be relied on as the only form of sun protection. No sunscreen provides 100% UV protection - remember to use in combination with protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and shade.

*Look for a sunscreen that:*

- Has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30+, labelled 'broad spectrum' - this will filter both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Is water resistant - less likely to be washed off by water activities or sweat.
- Meets Australians standards - look for 'AUST L' or 'AS/NZS 2604:98' on the label.
- Has a valid expiry date.

*How to apply sunscreen:*

- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors to clean, dry skin.
- Layer sunscreen onto exposed skin rather than rubbing it in.
- Apply a thick layer of sunscreen - most people do not use enough. About 30ml in total or one teaspoon for each arm or leg
- Reapply every two hours or more often if in water, sweating or towel drying.
- Remember your lips (a common skin cancer site). A zinc or lip balm will provide longer lasting protection than a cream.

## **SLAP**

Our faces are exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation every day of the year. It is therefore not surprising that areas such as the ears, temple, lips and nose are among the most

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common sites for skin cancer to develop. The Cancer Council recommends that when the UV Index is 3 or above you should protect your skin in five ways, including wearing a sun-safe hat. The right hat not only protects your face, head, ears and the back of the neck, but can reduce the amount of radiation reaching your eyes by 50%. Even when you are wearing a hat, some UV radiation will be reflected onto your face from the surrounding environment so it is important to remember the other aspects of sun safety (sunscreen, sunglasses, seek shade, appropriate clothing)

### **Choosing the right hat**

*A sun-safe hat will:*

- Have a broad brim to adequately shade the face
- Be made of close weave fabric to ensure no light gets through (UPF rating of 50)
- Have a dark lining to reduce reflection
- Not obscure vision or pose a safety concern (ie neck toggles that could get caught on play equipment)
- Have good ventilation

*Choose from one of the following styles*

- Broad brimmed hat: at least 7.5cm brim for adults and 6cm for children
- Bucket hat: with a deep crown and brim of at least 6cm
- Legionnaire style hat
- Baseball caps and sun visors do not protect the cheeks, ears and back of the neck and are not recommended.

### **School Uniform Hats should be worn**

- To and from school
- At recess
- At lunch
- During all outdoor classes such as Physical Education
- During all outdoor excursions or incursions

## **SEEK**

### **Shade Tips from the Sun Smart Committee**

Staying in the shade is one of the most effective ways to reduce sun exposure, but remember that other sun protection measures (clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) should also be used to avoid reflected UV radiation.

Whatever you use for shade, be it trees, built shade structures or some form of portable shade, make sure it casts a dark shadow. A combination of natural and built shade is essential for outdoor play space. Research has shown that natural outdoor play spaces with shrubs, uneven ground and low reflectance surfaces are better for sun protection and stimulate more physical activity.

Shade alone can reduce overall exposure to UV radiation by about 75%. Shade should be correctly designed to offer the greatest coverage during peak UV radiation times and peak periods of use. For best protection, choose shade that has extensive overhead and side cover and is positioned away from highly reflective surfaces.

## **SLIDE**

### **Why wear sunglasses?**

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight has been associated with the development of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Quality sunglasses protect your eyes by blocking 100 percent of the sun's harmful UV rays. Sunglasses also protect the delicate skin around the eyes from UV rays that cause wrinkles and premature aging. Sunglasses reduce glare for safer, more comfortable

vision. *Polarized* sunglasses are particularly effective at reducing glare from surface reflections. Close-fitting, "wrap" style sport sunglasses are particularly effective at reducing the potential for dry eyes and eye injuries from windblown particles. The *pupil* controls how much light reaches the light-sensitive *retina* in the back of the eye. In dim light, the pupil increases in size (dilates) to allow more light in. In bright light, the pupil constricts to keep too much light from striking the retina. In very bright conditions, the pupil cannot constrict enough to reduce light to a comfortable level. This causes a person to squint. Muscle fatigue associated with squinting and constant constriction of the pupil can lead to headaches and eyestrain.

**When choosing sunglasses for sun protection, remember:**

- wear close fitting, wrap around style sunglasses
- when buying new sunglasses, check the swing tag to ensure they meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003
- look for the words 'good UV protection' on the label or swing tag or look for categories 2, 3 or 4. These sunglasses absorb more than 95% of UV radiation
- some sunglasses have an eye protection factor or EPF rating; EPF 9 or 10 exceeding the Australian Standard and block almost all UV radiation
- polarised sunglasses reduce glare and make it easier to see on a sunny day.
- Prescription lenses → parents of children with prescription glasses should consider the need for their child to be provided with prescription wrap-around sunglasses.

**MYTHS ABOUT SUN PROTECTION**

**1 It is not possible to get sunburnt on windy, cloudy or cool days. FALSE**

You can get burnt on windy, cloudy and cool days. Sunburn is caused by UV radiation, which is not related to temperature – a cooler or windy day in summer will have a similar UV index to a warmer day. If it's windy and you get a red face, it's likely to be sunburn. There's no such thing as 'windburn'. You can also get sunburnt on cloudy days, as UV radiation can penetrate some clouds, and may even be more intense due to reflection of the bottom of the clouds.

**2. People with olive skin are not at risk of skin cancer. FALSE**

People with olive skin can get skin cancer too. Regardless of skin type, if you spent your childhood in the sun without adequate protection you are at higher risk of developing skin cancer than someone who grew up with good sun protection.

People who tan easily or are naturally dark skinned have a lower risk than people with fair skin that burns easily, but they are still at risk of skin damage and skin cancer.

**3. People need plenty of sun exposure to avoid vitamin D deficiency. FALSE**

You do not need to expose yourself to the sun during peak UV times to get enough vitamin D. On days when UV levels are moderate to high, most people get enough vitamin D through normal activity, even with sun protection. Increasing your sun exposure beyond the recommended level does not increase your vitamin D.

In summer, a few minutes of sun exposure outside peak UV periods provides adequate vitamin D. During winter, two to three hours of sun exposure spread throughout the week is sufficient for vitamin D. When UV levels are 3 or above, sun protection is still needed.

**4. You don't have to be concerned about skin cancer – if it happens you will see it and it is easy to treat FALSE**

Skin cancer treatment can be much more serious than having a lesion 'burnt off'. It can include surgery, chemotherapy and can result in permanent scarring. Skin cancer can also metastasise and spread to other parts of your body. Each year, more than 1850 Australians die of skin cancer.

Be alert for any new moles or changes to existing moles and consult your GP immediately if you notice anything concerning. Remember prevention is better than a cure.

**5. If you tan but don't burn, you don't need to bother with sun protection. FALSE**

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If your skin turns brown, it is a sign of sun damage, even if there is no redness or peeling. Your skin turns brown as a way of trying to protect itself because the UV rays are damaging living cells. A suntan offers limited sunburn protection of around SPF3, but doesn't protect against further DNA damage. If you tan easily, you are still at risk of skin cancer and need to use sun protection.

<https://www.cancerwa.asn.au/resources/specific-cancers/skin-cancer/>

<https://www.cancerwa.asn.au/resources/cancermyths/>

<https://www.cancerwa.asn.au/resources/cancer-update/2018-cancer-update/>