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### **Aria School Gets SunSmart Accredited**

Aria School has become accredited as SunSmart Schools under a new programme run by the Cancer Society.

Teaching SunSmart behaviours and keeping children safe in the sun are the key reasons schools want to be recognised by the SunSmart Schools Accreditation Programme.

Micaela-Joy Williamson, Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society programme coordinator, says the effort the school has put in to ensure they are proactive in the prevention of skin cancer is “wonderful”.

“New Zealand has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and it is widely recognised that over exposure to the sun and harmful UV rays play a significant role in this.

“The SunSmart Schools Accreditation Programme has been developed to encourage SunSmart behaviour among schools, to reduce children’s exposure to ultraviolet radiation and their risk of skin cancer.”

To achieve accreditation, schools need to implement a SunSmart policy during terms one and four that encourages SunSmart behaviours such as wearing broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats, SunSmart clothes, sunscreen and seeking shade during peak UV hours of 10am to 4pm.

It also includes creating a SunSmart environment that promotes the provision and use of shade as well as rescheduling outdoor activities outside peak UV times.

Curriculum content on how to be SunSmart is also part of the accreditation programme which is reviewed every three years.

Micaela-Joy says the accreditation process recognises the efforts a school is making to implement a comprehensive sun protection policy.

The programme was developed in Australia over a decade ago and has been shown to be the most effective. It is recommended by the World Health Organisation as the “Gold Standard” schools’ sun protection programme.

“All primary and intermediate schools throughout the country can apply to become accredited.”

The accreditation process is designed to be undertaken on-line through the SunSmart schools website with assistance from a schools local Cancer Society.

The website provides schools with SunSmart information, curriculum materials and draft policy information.

For more information, please visit: [www.sunsmartschools.co.nz](http://www.sunsmartschools.co.nz)

**Ends**

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