



Media Release – For immediate release  
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### **Pillans Point School Achieves SunSmart Accreditation**

Pillans Point School in Tauranga will be visited by a Cancer Society SunSmart Health Promoter next week in recognition of their recent achievement in becoming a SunSmart School.

The school will be presented with a new sign acknowledging their efforts as part of a new programme run by the Cancer Society to promote SunSmart awareness in schools.

Melanie Desmarais, Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society SunSmart Health Promoter, says teaching SunSmart behaviours and keeping children safe in the sun are key reasons schools want to be recognised by the SunSmart Schools Accreditation Programme.

“The schools put in a substantial effort to achieve the accreditation and ultimately into ensuring they are being proactive in the prevention of skin cancer.”

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 with this in mind and aims to encourage SunSmart behaviour at 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 11am 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.

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

“For many families sun protection may be an important component when selecting a school that ensures their child’s general safety.”

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,” Melanie says.

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

More ...

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

Melanie will visit Pillans Primary School to present the students and staff with their SunSmart Schools sign on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 1.30pm. As well the school will receive three shade trees to assist with their efforts in being SunSmart.

Pillans Primary joins a number of other Bay of Plenty schools who have received achieved SunSmart Schools Accreditation.

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

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