

## Why secondary schools need a SunSmart policy



### Why should secondary schools protect students from the sun?

Sun protection and skin cancer prevention in secondary schools is important for three reasons:

- 1). Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood and adolescence is a risk factor for skin cancer later in life. It is estimated that the majority of a person's lifetime UVR exposure occurs during childhood and adolescence. Episodes of sunburn, particularly during these periods, also increase the risk of melanoma.
- 2). Schools are places where adolescents spend a considerable amount of time during high UVR times (i.e. October to March inclusive especially between 11am and 4pm).
- 3). Schools provide opportunities through staff professional development and student curriculum, for both staff and students to learn how to be SunSmart.

### The sun protection policy needs to:

- describe how the school will protect students and staff from the harmful effects of excessive UVR.
- include SunSmart behaviour, curriculum, shade and policy review.
- be developed in consultation with the whole school community of BoT, staff, students, parents and caregivers.

### Sample sun protection policy

The following sample sun protection policy includes all the important SunSmart measures to protect staff and students from excessive UVR.

We encourage schools to copy and adopt this policy or incorporate the main points into their own SunSmart policy.

# Sample sun protection policy for secondary schools



## Rationale

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. New Zealand, along with Australia, has the highest melanoma rates in the world. One or more episodes of sunburn in childhood and adolescence have been shown to increase the risk of melanoma later in life.

**Throughout New Zealand sun protection is required from October to March inclusive, especially between the hours of 11 am and 4 pm. Therefore, this policy applies only during Terms 1 and 4.**

**Note:** There are also benefits from sun exposure, including Vitamin D absorption, which is important for the development of healthy bones, muscles and teeth. **During the winter months students should be encouraged to actively enjoy the sun.**

**This policy is adopted from (DATE) so that children attending (school name) are protected from harmful UV radiation from the sun.**

## Objectives

The goals of the SunSmart Policy are to:

- Increase student and community awareness about skin cancer and sun protection.
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures during Terms 1 and 4.
- Work towards a safe school environment providing shade for students, staff and the school community.
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school's SunSmart policy.

## Our Sun Protection strategies (implemented during Terms 1 and 4, between 11am and 4pm):

- All students and staff will be encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures to ensure they are well protected.
- Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events e.g. assemblies, camps, excursions and sporting events. Where possible, we have outdoor activities or events earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, or we use indoor venues.

### 1. Hats

- Students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed (minimum 7.5 cm brim), or bucket hats (deep crown and min 6 cm brim), whenever they are outside.

(Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.)

### 2. Clothing

- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform.
- School clothing is made of close weave fabric and includes shirts with collars and longer sleeves, and longer style dresses. Shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for are used for outdoor swimming.
- Sports uniforms and clothing for outdoor events such as sports days, include a shirt that covers the shoulders.

### 3. Shade

- The BoT will work towards providing adequate shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch area, cafeteria and outdoor lesson areas.
- In consultation with the school council, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and outdoor activities.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside. Students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to stay in the shade.

### 4. Sunscreen

- Students and staff are encouraged to use SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen. **For schools events such as sports days, students are required to bring sunscreen and reminded to apply it every 2 hours. Water resistant sunscreen is recommended for swimming.**

## 5. Role Modeling

- Staff are encouraged to act as role models by:
  - wearing sun protective hats and clothing outside
  - applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen
  - using shade whenever possible
- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

## 6. Curriculum

- Sun protection and skin cancer education awareness is included in the curriculum
- Students are encouraged to promote and model sun protection measures to the whole school community.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted through newsletters, school homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

## 7. Review

- The BoT, staff and student representatives monitor and review the sun protection policy every three years.

Policy Prepared by: (Name or title e.g. BoT) on (Date)

Policy approved by: (Name or title e.g. BoT) on (Date)

Policy will be reviewed on (Date)

For further information about developing your sun protection policy, please contact your local Cancer Society <http://www.cancernz.org.nz/Society/Divisions/>