

## **SunSmart Policy and Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

Schools are a key place for skin cancer prevention activities to occur for a number of reasons. Schools have opportunity for:

- Policy development
- Environmental change
- Education learning activity and
- Influence on personal sun protection behaviours

Schools are also where the majority of children and young people between the ages of 5 – 17 years are located for the majority of peak ultraviolet radiation hours, during the majority of the year.

Schools, as a setting for preventing skin cancer, are also important due to the fact that 80% of skin damage occurs in the first 20 years of life (NHMRC, 1997).

With this in mind, Mount St Bernard College realises the need to protect children's skin and educate them about SunSmart behaviour, thus reducing the risk of skin damage from exposure to the sun.

### **Aims**

The policy aims to:

- provide ongoing education that promotes personal responsibility for skin cancer prevention and early detection.
- provide environments that support SunSmart practices.
- create an awareness of the need to reschedule work commitments and outdoor activities to support SunSmart practices.

### **Procedures**

Our school recognises that winter sun also contributes to skin damage. The implementation of this policy will therefore be conducted throughout the year. The purpose of the SunSmart policy is to ensure that all children attending our school are protected from the harmful effects of the sun throughout the year.

**OUR COMMITMENT** is to:

- inform parents of the SunSmart policy when they enrol their child
- include the SunSmart policy statement in the school prospectus
- increase the amount of shade in the school grounds, where possible, by building shelters and planting trees
- incorporate education programmes that focus on skin cancer prevention into the school curriculum
- expect all staff to act as positive role models for children in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour
- seek ongoing support from parents and the school community for the SunSmart policy and its implementation, through newsletters, parent meetings etc.
- ensuring that all students and staff wear hats that protect the face, neck and ears, and SPF 15 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, when involved in outdoor activities
- encourage students without adequate sun protection to use shaded or covered areas at recess and lunch times
- review the school uniform to conform with the Queensland Cancer Fund SunSmart clothing guidelines
- ensure that, wherever practicable, outdoor activities take place before 10am or after 2pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time [AEST])

- ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and other outdoor events
- encourage the wearing of sunglasses for outdoor lessons
- review the SunSmart policy annually.

## **OUR EXPECTATIONS**

### **Parents/guardians will:**

- provide a College hat for their child and discuss the health benefits of wearing it
- act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour
- support the college SunSmart policy and expectations and help to design and regularly update the policy.

### **Students will:**

- be aware of the school's SunSmart policy
- use shaded or covered areas, where possible, for outdoor activities
- take responsibility for their own health and safety by being SunSmart
- comply with SunSmart expectations and guidelines by wearing suitable hats, clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses
- act as positive role models for other students in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour
- help to design and regularly update the SunSmart policy
- participate in initiatives to protect the college population from excessive exposure to the sun.

## **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

### **Re Student Complacency:**

- Involve student body in both the development and implementation processes;
- Incorporate sun-smart education programs into the school curriculum. Contact the Cancer Helpline on 13 11 20 for information and/or resources.

### **If Students Resist Wearing Hats, Sunscreen, etc.:**

- Involve students in the promotion of the Sun-Smart Policy;
- Consider the different types of sunscreen available which comply with the Queensland Cancer Fund recommendations;
- Encourage staff to act as positive role models in sun-smart behaviour by wearing appropriate hats, sunscreen, clothing and sunglasses whenever outdoors.

### **Re Disruption Of Routine:**

- Make the sun-smart practices an integral part of the daily routine. Reschedule activities to allow sufficient time for students to prepare for outdoor activities.

### **If Hats Are Not Kept On Outdoors:**

- Remind students to wear appropriate sun protection and/or move to shaded area.
- Ensure that students apply extra sunscreen when hats are not practical, for example during sports.