

CHRISTIES BEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 770,000 new cases treated each year and 2,000 deaths recorded each year. There are four factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to these statistics:

- The population is predominantly fair-skinned
- Ultraviolet radiation from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population when levels reach 3 and above.
- For most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
- Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to U.V radiation from the sun. Much of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable. U.V radiation is not related to air temperature. Skin damage can still be serious on cool or cloudy days.

Aims

The aims of the Sun Protection Policy are to promote among students, staff and parents:

- positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- personal responsibility for and decision-making about skin protection.
- awareness of the need for environmental changes in schools to reduce level of exposure to the sun.

Implementation Strategies for Skin Protection

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all children attending our school are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

As part of general skin-protection strategies:

- Children wear broad brim (at least 7.5cm) or legionnaire hats that shade the face, ears and neck. All children will be wearing appropriate hats that satisfy Cancer Council SA's guidelines.
- Children are be given opportunities to apply sunscreen before recess and lunch breaks.
- Children wear a top, which covers shoulders and upper arms. Sun protective clothing covers as much of the skin as possible, so staff, children and visitors should wear shirts/dresses with sleeves and high necklines or collars and longer-style shorts/skirts.
- Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor activities.
- Outdoor activities will be held in areas of shade or scheduled before 10:00am or after 2:00pm where possible, including outdoor assemblies, excursions and special days.

- Staff are required and parents will be encouraged to act as role models by practising Sun Protection behaviour by:
 - wearing protective hats and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities
 - using at least SPF 30+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
 - seeking shade whenever possible
- Hats and sunscreen are a requirement for all outdoor activities at the discretion of the teacher. Children not complying with this policy will sit in the shade for the duration of the activity.
- During recess and lunch times children will be expected to wear hats. We support a 'no hat, no play' policy.
- **Hats will be worn at all times when outside from 1st September to 30th April.** During the other months (May to August incl.) the school will be guided by the UV index, and when lower than 3, staff may encourage the removal of hats to gain sun exposure to maintain adequate vitamin D levels, while minimising the risk of skin cancer. Sunlight is the main source of vitamin D which is vital for the development and maintenance of strong, healthy bones.

Our school will:

- Provide adequate shelters and shade trees.
- Circulate new information on policy development and implementation regularly to students, staff and parents.
- Provide at least SPF 30+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for staff and student use and encourage the application prior to going outdoors when the UV level is 3 and above. Children should be reminded to reapply every 2 hours or more often if the sunscreen is wiped or washed off.
- Develop and monitor classroom programs on skin cancer prevention, which complement the Health & P.E. Curriculum.
- Reinforce regularly the Sun Protection Policy in a positive way through newsletters, parent meetings, student and teacher activities.
- Monitor students who have allergic reactions to the chemicals in sunscreen through their medical record keeping. Parents/Carers are encouraged to provide a suitable sunblock.

When enrolling a child, parents will be:

- Informed of the Sun Protection Policy.
- Requested to purchase a school hat or provide an appropriate hat for their child's use.
- Encouraged to provide at least SPF 30+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for their child's use.
- Encouraged to practise skin-protective behaviour themselves.

This policy is implemented during school hours - Monday - Friday (8:55am - 3:15pm) and outside of these hours if children are attending a school event.