Sun Smart Policy

St Mary’s Primary School

Policy Number:  Sun Smart Policy

Status:  Ratified

Date Issued:  March 2014

Evaluation and Review:  March 2016

Policy Contact Officer:  Yvonne Rincheval

Related Documentation:
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Sun Smart Policy - ‘No Hat, No Play’

RATIONALE
At St Mary’s we recognise the importance of Sun Protection for all students in our care and as such we must ensure a safe environment both in and out of the school.

St Mary’s Primary School has developed this sun protection policy because exposure to Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun causes sunburn, long term skin damage and an increased risk of sun cancer. Children have sensitive skin which places them at a greater risk of sunburn and skin damage. Unprotected sun exposure in the first 15 years of life can greatly increase a child’s risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Sun protection is needed whenever the UV index is 3 or above or between September to the end of April. During most of the year in NSW, even when it is cold, the UV index is at least 3. In our region, which is in the north of the state where UV levels are often higher, we have to be particularly careful.

We at St Mary’s Primary School have a responsibility to reduce children’s risk and to help establish effective long term sun safe behaviours.

A balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun’s UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first 10 years of life is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

SCOPE
To ensure that everyone attending St Mary’s Primary School is protected all year round from harmful UV rays of the sun.
To promote SunSmart behaviours and to reduce exposure to UV radiation through a comprehensive approach.

PRINCIPLES
This SunSmart Policy has been developed to:

- Ensure all students and staff have some UV exposure for vitamin D.
- Encourage the entire school community to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above.
- Work towards a safe school environment that provides shade for students, staff and the school community at appropriate times.
- Assist students to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the school’s SunSmart policy.

Staff are encouraged to access the SunSmart UV Alert at sunsmart.com.au to find out daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

The schools uses a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities from September to the end of April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
1. Shade
- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- The school makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch, canteen, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities.
- In consultation with the Parish, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.
- Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

2. Clothing
- Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. School clothing is cool, loose fitting and made of densely woven fabric. It includes shirts with collars, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

3. Hats
All students and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. bucket hats, whenever they are outside. Baseball or peak caps are not considered a suitable alternative.

4. Sunscreen
- Students and parents are reminded verbally and via notes to practice sun safety when participating in outdoor events.

Staff WHS and Role modelling
As part of WHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff:
- wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
- apply SPF 30+ or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible

Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and shade) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.

Curriculum
- Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum for all year levels.
- SunSmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.