



St. Thomas School & Pre-School

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Sun Smart Policy

Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 140,000 new cases and 1,000 deaths recorded each year . (Anti-Cancer Foundation of S.A.)

There are four factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to these statistics:-

- 1) The population is predominantly fair-skinned.
- 2) Ultraviolet light from the sun is sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
- 3) For most of the 20th Century, social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
- 4) 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 the skin. 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 aging as well as eye damage and immuno-suppression. Most skin damage and cancer is, therefore, preventable.

Although exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer, we are also mindful that too little exposure to the sun can cause a Vitamin 'D' deficiency. Therefore, during winter months (May – August) when the UV is below 3, the wearing of hats, when outside for short periods, may not be necessary but will be encouraged.

Aim

The aim of St. Thomas School & Pre-school Sun Smart Policy is to promote among children, staff and parents/caregivers:-

- 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 decision making about skin protection, including the importance of Vitamin 'D'.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in schools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun particularly during the period September to early May.

Implementation

This policy is for implementation throughout the whole year, though we acknowledge that during May to August in South Australia, skin protection may not be necessary for most people as UV radiation levels generally fall below 3.

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

- 1) Children and staff and St. Thomas School & Pre-school are encouraged to wear hats, when outside, throughout the whole year.
- 2) In the period September to May when outside, wear appropriate clothing which protects the skin.
 - (a) Children are expected to wear a broad brimmed or legionnaire style hat when involved in outside school activities. Children not wearing hats will be asked to remain in the building shaded areas of the school.
 - (b) Adults will also be asked to wear similar protection when outside. Umbrellas may be used to replace wearing of hat.
- 3) Minimise being in direct sunlight between the hours of strong sunlight -
 - (a) In cases where temperatures reach and exceed 36°C children will have inside play during recess and lunch periods.
 - (b) Whenever possible, outside activities should be scheduled before 11 a.m. (outside of that period May – august) and conducted indoors or in the shaded areas of the school, if practical.
 - (c) Sports days will be held in one of the cooler terms i.e. Term 2.
 - (d) The Library will be open for most lunchtime periods.

- 4) Use of shaded areas when outdoors (in periods of high UV, usually September to May). Encourage children to play in the shaded areas of Verandahs, sailed areas and to make use of any shade provided by Buildings and trees, during playtimes.
- 5) Apply 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen, to clean dry skin, 15-20 minutes Before going outdoors. Reapply every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time.
 - (a) Children should be encouraged to apply sunscreen before school and then again 15 minutes before going out to lunch/sport.
 - (b) Sunscreen will be supplied in all classrooms.
- 6) Reinforcing the Sun Smart policy in the Pre-school activities and in general school procedures are important strategies in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.
 - (a) Staff will be encouraged to model appropriate Sun Smart strategies in all activities.
 - (b) Staff will be kept up to date with information and resources through The Anti-Cancer Foundations materials.
- 7) St. Thomas School & Pre-school Sun Smart Policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and discussed at staff, S.R.C. and parent/caregivers meetings.