



PENNANT HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL

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.

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

1. The population is predominantly fair-skinned.
2. Due to the ozone layer diminishing the ultraviolet light from the sun, it is now of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
3. For many years, 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 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 if correct procedures are implemented early in life and continued on throughout life.

Primary schools can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the school community to take effective skin-protection measures.

Aims

The aims of the Pennant Hills Public School Sun Smart 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 the level of exposure to the sun.

Implementation Strategies for Skin Protection

This Policy is for implementation throughout the year with particular emphasis in Terms 1 and 4.

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.

1. *As part of general skin care protection strategies:*

- Children will wear hats to protect them whenever they are outside e.g. sport, sports carnivals, outdoor excursions and activities all year round.
- Children who do not have their hats with them remain in the shade under Covered Outdoor learning Areas (COLAs) and tree shade areas.
- Children are encouraged to use SPF30+ while outside and to re-apply it every two hours.
- Children are encouraged to wear sun-safe clothing which provides protection from the sun e.g. shirts with collars and sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.
- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities particularly during summer periods.
- Outdoor activities are held in areas of shade whenever possible and particularly during the summer months.
- Teachers schedule outdoor activities including sport before 10.00 am and after 2.00 pm (11 a.m. and 3 p.m. daylight saving time) whenever possible.
- Teachers consider availability of shade and sun protection measures when planning all school excursions, with information and permission notes detailing required sun protection needs, including hats and sunscreen.

Staff are requested to act as role models by practising Sun Smart behaviour by:

- wearing protective hats and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities;
- using a SPF30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for skin protection; and
- seeking shade whenever possible.

2. *Our school:*

- ensures that school hats are appropriate and satisfy Cancer Council guidelines;
- encourages and promotes the wearing of the appropriate school sun-safe bucket style hat which is sold at the school's Uniform Shop. Baseball caps are not recommended;
- ensures that, wherever possible, adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and outdoor events through the erection of sun safety tents;
- has Covered Outdoor Learning Areas and shade trees on both school sites and ensures that if trees need to be removed for safety reasons, that new, mature trees are planted in their place. The school consults regularly with parents and carers and in particular, the P & C Gardens and Grounds Committee, with regard to trees and shade;
- incorporates programs on skin cancer prevention in its curriculum;
- regularly reinforces the Pennant Hills Sun Smart Policy in a positive way and promotes sun protection information through newsletters, at parent and staff meetings, school assemblies and other student and teacher activities; and
- educates students as to why sun safety is important and the actions they need to take to protect themselves.

3. *When enrolling a child at our school, parents are:*

- informed of the Pennant Hills Public School Sun Smart Policy which is also available on the school's website;
- requested to purchase a school hat or provide an appropriate hat for their child's use;
- encouraged to provide SPF30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for their child's use; and
- are encouraged to practise skin-protective behaviour themselves.

Review date: March 2016