



Mater Dei Primary School

SunSmart Policy Statement

Rationale

Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 per cent are skin cancers. Research indicates childhood sun exposure is an important contributing factor to the development of skin cancer in later life. Given students are at school during peak ultraviolet radiation (UVR) times throughout the day, between 10am and 3pm, schools play a major role in both minimising a student's UVR exposure and providing an environment where policies and procedures can positively influence student behaviour.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Research shows severe sunburn contributes to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is therefore preventable.

Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) levels are highest during the hours children are at school. As children will spend a portion of their day outdoors, we are committed to protecting them from the harmful effects of the sun.

With this in mind Mater Dei 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; and
- Create an awareness around scheduling outdoor activities to support SunSmart practices.

Procedures

Our school recognises that winter sun also contributes to skin damage. This policy will therefore be implemented throughout the year.

The purpose of this SunSmart policy is to ensure all children attending our establishment are protected from the harmful effects of the sun throughout the year.

Our Commitment

Mater Dei will:

- Inform parents of the SunSmart policy when they enrol their child;
- Include the SunSmart policy statement in the school prospectus and Handbook;
- Increase the amount of shade in the school grounds, where possible, by building shelters and planting trees;
- Incorporate education programs that focus on skin cancer prevention as per the school Australian curriculum;
- Encourage all teachers and 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 and parent meetings;
- Ensure all students and staff wear hats that protect the face, neck and ears and SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen when involved in outdoor activities;
- Encourage students without adequate sun protection to use shaded or covered areas at morning tea and lunch times;
- Ensure adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and other outdoor events;
- Ensure SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is available in the Office and included in the school first aid kit;
- Have SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (roll-on) listed as a recommendation for parents to purchase for their child at the beginning of each year. Students to keep in their bag and apply as needed.
- Review the SunSmart policy annually.

Our Expectations

Parents/carers will:

- Be encouraged to apply to their child a SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before leaving for school;
- Act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour; and
- Support the school's SunSmart policy

Students will:

- Be aware of the school's SunSmart policy;
- Take responsibility for their own health and safety by being SunSmart. i.e. wearing their hat , playing in the shade, applying sunscreen as needed, ensure that they wear a rash-vest or swimwear which fully covers their trunk.
- Act as positive role models for other students in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour;
- Participate in curriculum related activities where they *access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan (Draft Health and Physical Education Curriculum Document 2014)*

References

- Cancer Council Queensland website, www.cancerqld.org.au
- Cancer Council Queensland, 2010, Personal Protection brochure Personal_Protection.pdf
- Cancer Council Queensland skin cancer fact sheet, 2013, http://www.cancerqld.org.au/icms_docs/61399_skin_cancer_fact_sheet.pdf
- Cancer Council Victoria, 2013, SunSmart Stats and Statements 2013 – National Skin Cancer Committee, March 18.
- Cancer Council Australia, SunSmart position statements, <http://www.cancer.org.au/policy-and-advocacy/position-statements/sun-smart/>, viewed 11 October 2013.

Identification of sun protection measures that are already being undertaken.

This checklist can be used as a discussion document for improving sun protection at Mater Dei:

Sun Protection Strategy	How can we improve in this area?
100 per cent of students wear either legionnaire style, bucket or broad-brimmed hats.	Yes, School hat complies with this style, and No Hat No Play policy in place.
No hat, play in the shade rule is implemented.	Yes. Children play on the deck or go to the Library
Teachers wear either legionnaire style, bucket or broad-brimmed hats.	Teachers wear broad brimmed hats.
Parents are actively encouraged to wear hats when visiting the school.	This could be improved with information in handbook, and reminders in newsletters.
Students are actively encouraged to use shaded areas.	Yes
All students eat lunch in full shade.	Mostly. However, children tend to eat in the sun during the colder months
Sun protection and skin cancer awareness is incorporated in the curriculum at all year levels.	Draft Health and Physical Education Curriculum Document 2014) states that students will <i>access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan</i> There is no specific reference to 'sun safety'
A plan is in place to increase/maintain the amount of shade at the school.	Yes.
Where possible, outdoor activities are conducted outside peak UVR times or held under cover.	Not really possible for all activities.

SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students whenever they go outside.	Yes. This is located in the Office and First Aid Kit
Students are encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen.	No, again included in a policy statement in handbook, newsletter prompts.
The design of the school uniform provides good protection from the sun, for example, shirts and collars, longer sleeves.	Yes, except for sleeve length on girls dress.
Students attending outdoor swimming classes are required to wear t-shirts, rash-vests or swimwear which fully covers their trunk.	Yes.
There are regular sun protection reminders (for example through school newsletters).	Yes, for sports days etc. But more could be included through newsletter.
Sun protection is incorporated into the planning of all outdoor events.	Yes. Consideration is given to this area when planning excursions and camps and scheduling of outdoor school based events (where possible).