



SunSmart Policy

Rationale

Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Two out of every three Queenslanders will develop some sort of skin cancer in their lifetime. Research suggests that at least two-thirds of all melanomas occurring in Australia could be prevented if children were protected from the sun during their first 15 years.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Research shows that 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 that children are at school. With this in mind, St Benedict's School 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.
- Create an awareness of the need to reschedule work commitments and outdoor activities to support SunSmart practices.

Procedures

Our school recognises that winter sun also contributes to skin damage. The implementation of this policy will therefore be conducted throughout the year.

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

Our Commitment

St Benedict's School will:

- Inform parents of the SunSmart policy when they enrol their child.
- Include the SunSmart policy statement in the school prospectus.
- 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 into the school 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, parent meetings etc.

- Ensure that all students and staff wear hats that protect the face, neck and ears, and SPF 15 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, when involved in outdoor activities.
- Encourage students without adequate sun protection to use shaded or covered areas at recess and lunch times.
- Review the school uniform to conform to the Queensland Cancer Fund SunSmart clothing guidelines.
- Incorporate a SunSmart swimsuit into the school uniform.
- Ensure that, wherever practicable, outdoor activities take place before 10am or after 2pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time [AEST]).
- Ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and other outdoor events
- Review the SunSmart policy annually.

Our Expectations

Parents/carers will:

- Provide a SunSmart hat for their child and ensure that they wear it to and from school. The Queensland Cancer Fund recommends the following hats:
 - 8-10cm broad-brimmed
 - legionnaire-style
- Ensure that their child applies SPF15 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before leaving for school.
- Ensure that their child's clothing provides adequate protection from UVR. The Queensland Cancer Fund recommends clothing that has the following features:
 - Dark-coloured
 - Collars and sleeves
 - Closely woven fabric
 - Natural fibre
- Act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour.
- Support the school's SunSmart policy and help to design and regularly update the policy.

Students will:

- Be aware of the school's SunSmart policy.
- Take responsibility for their own health and safety by being SunSmart.
- Comply with SunSmart rules and guidelines by wearing suitable hats, clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Apply SPF 15 broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors.
- Act as positive role models for other students in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour
- Help to design and regularly update the SunSmart policy.
- Participate in SunSmart education programs.

Source: Queensland Cancer Fund (1997) *Working towards a SunSmart Queensland: a policy guide for organisations*