

Why secondary schools need a SunSmart policy



Why should secondary schools protect students from the sun?

Sun protection and skin cancer prevention in secondary schools is important for three reasons:

1. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood and adolescence is a risk factor for skin cancer later in life. It is estimated that the majority of a person's lifetime UVR exposure occurs during childhood and adolescence. Episodes of sunburn, particularly during these periods, also increase the risk of melanoma.
2. Schools are places where adolescents spend a considerable amount of time during high UVR times (ie. September to April inclusive especially between 10am and 4pm).
3. Schools provide opportunities through staff professional development and student curriculum, for both staff and students to learn how to be SunSmart.

The sun protection policy needs to:

- describe how the school will protect students and staff from the harmful effects of excessive UVR.
- include SunSmart behaviour, curriculum, shade and policy review.
- be developed in consultation with the whole school community of BoT, staff, students, parents and caregivers.

Sample sun protection policy

On the Cancer Society's website view a sample sun protection policy, which includes all the important SunSmart measures to protect staff and students from excessive UVR.

We encourage schools to copy and adopt this policy or incorporate the main points into their own SunSmart policy.