Mc Donald Park School

SUN SMART SKIN PROTECTION POLICY

May 2012

Rationale:

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with skin cancers accounting for around 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year in Australia. Skin cancer affects one in two Australians.

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

1. The population is predominantly fair-skinned.
2. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
3. In Australia, there is reduced ozone layer protection from UV radiation.
4. For many years social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
5. 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. There is considerable evidence that UV radiation exposure, particularly during childhood and adolescence contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of developing 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.

The Cancer Council South Australia recommends people protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 (3 – 5 is the moderate range) and above – this is when the UVR level is strong enough to cause damage to the skin. The guidelines for South Australia are that a skin protection policy be in place from the beginning of September until the end of April. The Cancer Council also recommends that particular care should be taken between 10am – 3.00pm, when the UVR levels are at their highest.

Schools are ideally placed to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the school community to use effective skin protection.
Aims:

The aims of the McDonald Park R-7 School’s Skin Protection Policy are to promote among children, 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 our school to reduce the level of exposure to the sun

Implementation:

This policy is for implementation from the 1st September to 30th April. Outside of this time care should also be taken when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our school, including Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the sun.

It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of McDonald Park R-7 School, inclusive of the Out of School Hours Care Program will use the following skin protection strategies:

1. **Planning:** Take particular care if in the direct sun between the hours of 10am and 3pm and when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above, outside of these times.
   
   1.1 Where practical, outdoor activity sessions will be held in shaded areas.
   
   1.2 Whenever possible, all outdoor activities, including Vacation Care programs, will be scheduled before 10am and after 3pm, conducted indoors, or in the shaded areas of the school.

2. **Environment:** Use the shade of tree, verandahs, pergolas, umbrellas and tents whenever outdoors.
   
   2.1 Tree planting will become a regular school event, with priority given to the open space grassed area and around the oval.
   
   2.2 Sails, providing shade, have been erected over all 4 play equipment areas.
   
   2.3 The further provision of shade areas will appear as a priority on any forward planning documents for the school.

3. **Behaviour:** The wearing of appropriate clothing that protects the skin.
3.1 Students, staff and parents will be expected to wear a broad brimmed that, legionnaire style hat, or a bucket hat with a deep crown and a brim width of 6cm whenever they are involved in outside activities during the recommended months and times.

3.2 Children not wearing an appropriate hat will be expected to play in the shade.

3.3 Students will be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and at least elbow length sleeves, longer style shorts/skirts and rash vests or t-shirts for swimming, if using an outside pool.

4. **Behaviour:** Students will be encouraged to apply a broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ to clean, dry skin, 15 - 20 minutes before going outdoors to lunch or curriculum activities. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time (i.e. sports days, excursions, camps), or more frequently if involved in water activities or perspiring.

4.1 From September until the end of April, students will be encouraged to apply sunscreen before school in the morning.

4.2 Class budgets will support the supply and availability of SPF30+ sunscreen in classrooms. Parents will be asked to notify class teachers if their child has allergies or particular needs and in such cases encouraged to supply the sunscreen for their child.

4.3 Sunscreen application will be encouraged before going out to recess; lunch or any outdoor activity between 10am and 3pm adequate time must be allowed for students to apply sunscreen before going outdoors.

5. **Curriculum:** Reinforcing the SunSmart message in all school activities and in general school procedures is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.

5.1 Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies in all outdoor school activities.

5.2 Skin cancer prevention will be included in the curriculum at each year level with a particular focus at the beginning of Term 1 each year (and refocus beginning of September)

5.3 Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with The Cancer Council South Australia.

5.4 Information about the school’s SunSmart Policy will be given to all new staff, students and families.

5.5 Promote and reinforce SunSmart behaviour to the whole school community eg in newsletters, school assemblies, parent meetings, Sports Days

6. **Evaluation:** The McDonald Park School’s Skin Protection Policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis with staff, SRC and School Council input.

6.1 Policy issues will be discussed at staff, Student and Physical Wellbeing meetings, SRC and Governing Council.