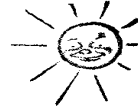




# Illawarra Christian School



## Sunsafe Policy

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### **RATIONALE**

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 160,000 new cases and 1,200 deaths recorded each year.

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

- \* The population is predominantly fair skinned.
- \* Ultraviolet light from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
- \* For most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
- \* 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 aging. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable.

Our God has given us our skin, and we are to care for it.

Our school 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 SUNSAFE 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 our school to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR SKIN PROTECTION.**

This policy is for implementation throughout the school year.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children and staff attending this school are protected, as much as possible, throughout the year from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

### **1. As part of general skin protection strategies, I.C.S. will:**

- \* Increase, where possible, the amount of shade within the school grounds.
- \* Incorporate across the school curriculum (K - Yr 12) appropriate educational programs which focus on skin cancer prevention.
- \* Strongly encourage positive role modelling of Sunsafes behaviour by all teachers, parents and ancillary staff to:  
Wear protective hats and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities.  
Use SPF 15+, broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for skin protection.  
Seek shade wherever possible.
- \* Require all students from Prep to Year 12, wear approved school hats which protect the face, neck and ears; shirts with collars and sleeves. They will also be strongly encouraged to use SPF 15+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen whenever they are outside, e.g. sport, sports carnivals, outdoor excursions, assemblies and other such activities.
- \* Seek ongoing support from parents and the community for the Sunsafes Policy and its implementation.
- \* Require students without adequate protection to use designated shaded or covered areas at recess and lunchtimes. If the failure to comply with the policy in this regard is repeated, a note is to be sent home to parents.
- \* Timetable as many outdoor activities, as practical, including Sport, Physical Education and assemblies before 10 am and after 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time).
- \* Encourage students, staff and parents to be actively involved in initiatives to protect the school population from excessive exposure to the sun.
- \* Reverse the current timetabling of recess and lunch so that students spend the longer break earlier in the day.
- \* Encourage parents to supply their child/ren with SPF 15+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for use at school. Parents will also be encouraged to ensure that their child/ren apply sunscreen before leaving home.
- \* Ensure that a supply of sunscreen is available at outdoor activities such as sports carnivals.

## **2. As part of the Physical Education Program I.C.S. will:**

- \* Require students and strongly encourage staff and parents to:  
Wear hats that shade the face, neck and ears.  
Wear shirts with sleeves and collars that are made from closely woven fabric.  
Apply SPF 15+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.
- \* Where possible, schedule outdoor activities outside the hours of 10 am - 2 pm (11 am - 3 pm daylight saving time).

## **3. The school Sports Program will, in addition to those strategies mentioned under Physical Education, provide:**

- \* Where practical or possible, a variety of sports which can be played at indoor venues.
- \* Shade and shelter at outdoor sporting functions, particularly if held between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) wherever possible.

## **4. As part of the Curriculum I.C.S. will:**

- \* Involve the students in a variety of learning activities across the curriculum to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills pertinent to skin protection.

## **5. When enrolling a student, parents will be:**

- \* Informed of the Sunsafe Policy.
- \* Required to purchase an approved school hat.
- \* Encouraged to provide SPF 15+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for use at school.
- \* Encouraged to act as positive role models and practice skin protective behaviour themselves, particularly when attending school functions.

## **6. General.**

I.C.S. will:

- \* Ensure that school hats are appropriate and satisfy Cancer Council Guidelines.
- \* Ensure that, where possible, adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and other outdoor activities.
- \* Provide more shelters and shade trees.
- \* Ensure that Sunsafe practices are incorporated into other policies and school activities.
- \* Promote safe sun practices to the entire school community in a variety of ways such as newsletter spots

**Other ways to support Sun Safe practices both at school and in our communities:**

Schedule assemblies at suitable times as indoor space is limited.

Provide portable shelters such as tents for use at outdoor venues whenever possible.

Lobby the local councils, community and sporting groups to help provide more shade and sheltered areas at community venues.

Write to the local newspapers and seek support for, and interest in, an ongoing campaign especially in summer.

Conduct activities to raise funds to improve shaded areas.

Include Sunsafe Policy information in future information brochures and displays.

Consider 'Tree Planting Bees' at both campuses as a complete school community activity.

Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the Sunsafe Policy and ways that it can be improved.

## **Proposed changes as a result of the Sunsafe Policy:**

### **1. Timetabling.**

Reverse the present recess and lunch breaks so that students and staff are outdoors the longest at a safer time of the day.

Timetable where possible for activities such as Sport, P.E., Health Hustle, Assemblies, Carnivals to occur during either early or late periods of the school day. *It is recognised that this will not always be possible because of limited space and thirteen classes at Cordeaux and eleven at Tongarra. Also, this will depend on availability of community sporting facilities.*

### **2. Uniform.**

Approved hats will be compulsory for ALL students from Kindergarten to Year 6, and STRONGLY encouraged for Years 7 - 12, when outdoors, except when moving from class to class. The approved hats are as will be supplied by the Uniform shops of both campuses and meet Cancer Council guidelines. The usual practice of differentiating between the Infants/Primary section of the school from the Secondary section has been maintained. The Secondary Student hats will be the same style and colour at both campuses. The Infants/Primary hats will be different colours for each campus at this stage. *It is recognised that some sporting activities will not permit the wearing of the broad brimmed hats and allowances will need to be made for these sports. Hats will be worn throughout the year as damage from the sun can occur at any time of the year.*

Sunglasses will be formally added as an optional uniform item. Sunglasses have already been permitted but the aim now is to actively encourage the wearing of sunglasses when outdoors for protection of the eyes. Students may wear any sunglasses with the proviso that Infants/Primary students wear sunglasses that are 'shatter proof'. This is due to the high degree of 'physical contact' that younger children tend to have when playing. The Uniform shops will be selling Cancer Council approved, shatter resistant, "Blocker" sunglasses. As students purchase the sunglasses it is hoped that their names will be engraved on the arm of the glasses so that they can be reunited with their owner if lost.

Sports shirts have already been modified to meet Cancer Council Guidelines and look very smart at both campuses.

### **3. Staff.**

All staff are strongly encouraged to set positive role models, as well as protect themselves, by wearing Cancer Council approved hats, appropriate sunscreens and seeking shade wherever practical.

Most staff are already doing this and it is really encouraging. Students do look at our staff and parent helpers and are more likely to follow the examples set.

Staff will be supported by the Board and Association in ensuring that students abide by the Sunsafe Policy.

#### **4. Parents.**

Parents are encouraged to act as positive role models to their children by practicing Sunsafe habits within their family life. They are also encouraged to set an example to students by the wearing of hats and sunscreens at all school outdoor activities.

Parents are encouraged to provide a supply of sunscreen for each child to use at school. The idea of school providing sunscreens in all classrooms for teachers to supervise was looked at, but was not accepted due to:

- . the fact that it needs to be applied at least fifteen minutes before going in the sun to be effective. This would be very disruptive to class activities and also place an extra load on staff.
- . the fact that about 10 -15% of people are likely to have a reaction to different sunscreens. By parents providing the sunscreen it will prevent having to get permission for the mass skin testing of every student in the school.
- . our desire to encourage students to take responsibility for this aspect of skin protection. Encouragement, education and training should come from the home and the school.

#### **5. Environmental.**

As finances and priorities permit, it is highly desirable to increase the amount of shaded/sheltered areas at both campuses. This can either be in the form of 'tree planting bees' (following approved landscaping plans) or fixed structures.

The provision of easily transportable, temporary shelters for outdoor events such as sports carnivals, walkathons, etc is an important priority for the sun safety of our students and staff. This could either be in the form of purchasing an appropriate structure (there is a type available for this particular purpose) or arranging loans of such structures when needed.

#### **6. General.**

It is proposed to have the finalised Sunsafe Policy operating from the beginning of Term 4, 1997. A period of grace until the beginning of the 1998 school year will be in place.

Any timetabling changes are not proposed to begin until the beginning of the 1998 school year due to the horrific thought of imposing the incredible amount of work involved for our staff at this stage of the year. It will also make it much easier when staff allocations are being made for the new school year.

It is proposed that there will be a major launch of the Sunsafe Policy in Term 4. It is envisaged that this day would include a 'mufti' day for students who can choose to wear either appropriate Sunsafe clothing or their school uniform. It will not be an excuse to simply wear anything. It is also planned to have activities for students at both campuses based on Sunsafe practices and may include things such as poster competitions which can then be used in, for example, shopping centre displays to educate the wider community. The Student Council from Cordeaux and the Secondary classes from Tongarra are getting involved in organising some activities for their respective campuses.