

Sun Sense

NEW SOUTH WALES
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



Information for Parents and Caregivers

Schools are concerned that Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Our schools take sun safety seriously and run programs to make students aware of the damaging effects of the sun.

Each school has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for students and staff. This includes providing adequate protection from the sun throughout the year.

Skin damage in childhood

Much of the sun exposure that causes skin damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. By the age of 15 many children have developed irreversible skin damage from exposure to the sun.

Stay in the shade

Students are encouraged to protect their skin by:

- reducing their exposure to the sun, wherever possible
- wearing broad-brimmed hats in the playground to protect the face, neck and ears, and playing in shaded areas. Some primary schools have adopted a 'no hat, play in the shade' policy for recess and lunchtimes i.e. if the child doesn't have a hat they must play in the shade
- wearing clothing (preferably of closely woven fabric) with collars and long sleeves to provide maximum sun protection
- remaining in the shade whenever possible, particularly during peak ultraviolet radiation (UVR) times.
- participating in sun protection activities
- using 15+ broad-spectrum sunscreen as well as the other sun protection measures. Some schools provide sunscreen for use by children. Parents and caregivers should check this with the school principal.

Sunscreens should be applied before going outside and reapplied frequently as directed by the manufacturer.

Sun safety is also important outside of school. Whether in the backyard or on the beach, children should wear a hat and sunscreen. By practising sun safety at home, parents and caregivers can help teachers to enforce sun safety rules in school.

Children will come to appreciate the importance of sun protection not only during their schooling, but also throughout their lives.

Covered Outdoor Learning Areas (COLAs)

Covered Outdoor Learning Areas (COLAs) are multi-purpose structures that provide sun and rain protection, and additional learning space. Examples may be an outdoor assembly, an extension of the communal hall or a covered canteen area. COLAs also provide a refuge for children excluded from playing in the sun under the 'No hat, play in the shade' rule.

See also:

[How to enjoy the outdoors without damaging your skin.](#)

[Save your skin from Australia's commonest cancer.](#)