

Hat Guidelines for Primary Schools

Skin cancer rates are higher in Australia than anywhere else in the world, with skin cancers accounting for around 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year.

The major cause of skin cancer is exposure to the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun over many years, particularly during childhood and adolescence. Even if exposure does not cause obvious sunburn damage still occurs and accumulates over the years. It is never too late to start protecting your skin.

Skin protection is important all year round in the Northern Territory

Why hats?

Common sites of skin damage and skin cancer are the neck, ears, temples, lips, face and nose. These areas are constantly exposed to the elements and therefore, generally receive more UVR than other body parts.

Wearing a hat is one strategy that is recommended by The Cancer Council of the Northern Territory to protect the face, back of the neck and ears.

Hats should always be used in combination with other forms of sun protection practices such as:

- seeking shade where possible (especially around the middle of the day)

- timetabling outdoor activities outside the times when UVR levels are most intense (between 10am and 3pm) where ever possible

- wearing protective clothing – lightweight shirts with collars and long sleeves

- applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.

All schools should have an active skin protection policy to minimise the danger of excessive UVR exposure for both staff and students.



Which type of hat?

The Cancer Council recommends all students and staff wear hats that provide good shade to the face, back of the neck and ears when outdoors.

Broad brimmed hat



Brimms should be at least 7.5cms wide. A broad brimmed hat that provides good shade can considerably reduce the exposure of UVR to the face. The brim width for children under 10 should be proportional to the size of the child's head and ensure that their face is well shaded.

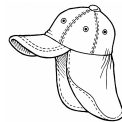
Bucket hat

Bucket or surfie style hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be **at least 6cm** and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade.



The brim width on bucket hats for pre-school aged children should be proportional to the size of the child's head ensuring that their face is sufficiently shaded (minimum of 5cm as a rough guide).

Legionnaire hat



Legionnaire style hats should have a flap that covers the neck and meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face.

Baseball caps and sun visors are **NOT** recommended as they leave the ears and back of the neck exposed.

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March 2009



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Factors to consider when choosing a hat for your school.

We encourage schools to consult widely with students, staff and parents before introducing one of the three hat styles recommended by The Cancer Council.

- ◆ Factors to consider include:
- ◆ good sun protection
- ◆ fashion trends practicalities (eg which hat is safe for sport)
- ◆ Cost
- ◆ and most importantly, safety.

Ventilation should also be a consideration if the hat is to be used during physical activity or warmer weather.

Stylish, fashionable hats that meet The Cancer Council requirements are now widely available.

Hats all year round?

In the Northern Territory due to our climate the UVR levels are high all year round.

It is therefore important to remember that skin protection should still be maintained all year round and particularly if students and staff are outside for an extended period of time such as for a sports day.

UVR and temperature

UVR cannot be seen or felt and the intensity of such radiation is not related to air temperature.

People often get sunburnt on a cooler day because they tend to stay out in the direct sun for longer rather than seeking shade or covering up as on a hot day.



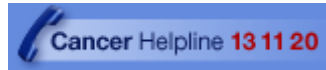
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Slip



Slop



Slap



Seek



Slide