

2026 SUNSMART POLICY STATEMENT



St. Patrick's Primary School

Gympie

Rationale

Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. About two in three Australians will be diagnosed with some form of skin cancer before the age of 70. Almost all skin cancers are caused by overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun. Skin cancer is almost entirely preventable through effective sun protection when UV levels reach 3 or above. In Queensland, these levels are reached all year round, even on cool or cloudy days. These UV levels are highest during the hours that children are at school.

Skin can burn in as little as 10 minutes in the Queensland sun. Young children are especially vulnerable due to their sensitive skin. UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is associated with increased risk of skin cancer later in life

As children and employees are typically at school during peak UV times, schools play a major role in providing an environment where policies and procedures can positively influence long term SunSmart Behaviours.

At St Patrick's Primary School, Gympie, we realise the need to protect children's skin and educate them about SunSmart behaviour, thus reducing the risk of skin damage from exposure to the sun.

Aims

The policy aims to:

- provide ongoing education that promotes personal responsibility for skin cancer prevention and early detection.
- provide environments that support SunSmart practices.
- create an awareness of the need to reschedule work commitments and outdoor activities to support SunSmart practices.
- Take opportunities that arise to continue to educate students on SunSmart behaviours

Procedures

The purpose of the SunSmart policy is to ensure that all children attending our school, along with our employees are protected from the harmful effects of the sun throughout the year.

Our school recognises that winter sun also contributes to skin damage. The implementation of this policy will therefore be conducted throughout the year.

Where practical, outdoor activities are scheduled to minimise time outdoor during periods of high to extreme UV.

Our commitment

St Patrick's Primary School will:

- inform parents of the SunSmart policy when they enrol their child
- include the SunSmart policy statement in the parent and staff handbooks
- ensure the school's SunSmart policy appears on the school's website
- incorporate education programs that focus on skin cancer prevention into the school curriculum
- encourage all teachers and staff to act as positive role models for children in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour
- seek ongoing support from parents and the school community for the SunSmart policy and its implementation, through newsletters, parent meetings etc.
- ensure that all students and staff wear hats that protect the face, neck and ears, and SPF 15 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, when involved in outdoor activities
- encourage students without adequate sun protection to use shaded or covered areas at recess and lunch times
- review the school uniform to conform with the Queensland Cancer Fund SunSmart clothing guidelines
- incorporate a SunSmart swimsuit strategy to ensure students are adequately covered during carnivals
- ensure that, wherever practicable, outdoor activities take place before 10am or after 2pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time [AEST])
- ensure that adequate shade is provided at sporting carnivals and other outdoor events
- review the SunSmart policy annually
- Reinforce and promote SunSmart behaviours via the school newsletter, website, assemblies and social media

Our expectations

Parents/carers will:

- provide a SunSmart hat (as per the school uniform) for their child and ensure that they wear it to and from school.
- ensure that their child applies SPF15 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before leaving for school
- be mindful that their child's clothing provides adequate protection from UVR. The Queensland Cancer Fund recommends clothing that has the following features:
 - dark-coloured
 - collars and sleeves
 - closely woven fabric
 - natural fibre
- act as positive role models by practising SunSmart behaviour
- support the school's SunSmart policy and provide feedback where necessary

- Students will:
- be aware of the school's SunSmart policy
- take responsibility for their own health and safety by being SunSmart
- comply with SunSmart rules and guidelines by wearing suitable hats, clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses
- act as positive role models for other students in all aspects of SunSmart behaviour
- participate in SunSmart education programs
- provide feedback where necessary

Benefits of a Sun Protection Policy

Having a comprehensive sun protection policy demonstrates St. Patrick's Primary School's commitment to our students and employees, and formally recognises the harm caused by UV radiation exposure and the duty of care to promote and support the health and wellbeing of our organisation.