

Gooseberry Hill Primary School gets (sun) smarter

Gooseberry Hill Primary School is smarter than it used to be – it has become a SunSmart School!

As part of the National SunSmart Schools Program operated by the Cancer Council Australia in conjunction with Cancer Council WA, Gooseberry Hill PS has developed and implemented a comprehensive sun protection policy which actively protects students and staff from dangerous over exposure to the sun.

Regional Education Officer Mikala Atkinson, of Cancer Council WA said Gooseberry Hill PS was helping to make today's school students a SunSmart generation with a lower risk of skin cancer than past generations.

Mrs Atkinson explained that the program encourages hat wearing, the use of minimum SPF 30 broad spectrum sunscreen, changes to school timetables and parents and teachers acting as positive role models.

To achieve SunSmart School membership, schools must complete a simple application questionnaire and forward a copy of their sun protection policy to the Cancer Council WA for assessment.

Principal Matthew Snell said that many SunSmart strategies had been successfully introduced within the school. These strategies include:

- The compulsory wearing of broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style hats all year round.
- Building of pergolas and other shade structures in the school grounds.
- Tree planting activities to provide shelter from the sun.
- SunSmart education included in the curriculum from Years 1-6.
- Sunscreen available for student and staff use.
- SunSmart information in school newsletters.

Mr Snell said the students, staff and parents were working together to ensure their school is SunSmart. "Our SunSmart School will contribute to the fight against skin cancer by teaching students how to protect themselves from the sun and thus reducing their risk of skin cancer".

Young Australian's exposure to UV radiation contributes to their risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers later in life. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world.

Media statement ends

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