UV Protection Policy

Rationale
Childhood and adolescent exposure to ultra violet radiation (UV) is a major contributing factor in the development of skin cancer. Students can spend up to eight school hours per week in outdoor activities. Much of this time is between 11am and 3pm when UVR is most intense. Much of the sun exposure that causes skin damage occurs in childhood and adolescence.

Aim
To educate and assist students (and staff) to use SunSmart practices between August and May when UV levels are 3 and above for part or most of each day in Canberra, and strong enough to damage unprotected skin.

Implementation
St Michael’s has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for students and staff. This includes provision of adequate UV protection when UV levels reach 3 and above.

As part of the normal Health curriculum students will be taught the principles of sun protection in all year levels.

Broad-spectrum sunscreens with a SPF rating of at least 30+ should be used on the skin that cannot be protected by clothing or hat, particularly the face, ears and neck and the backs of hands and lower arms.

It is presumed that sunscreen is applied to students before they leave home, particularly during Terms 1 and 4, however students and staff will also have daily access to sunscreen i.e sunscreen will be located in all classrooms.

A pump pack of Cancer Council Broad-spectrum, water resistant, SPF 30 (or higher) sunscreen will be provided in each classroom. Current active ingredients are: Octyl Methoxycinnamate, Oxybenzone and Butyl Methoxydibenzoylmethane. Students are reminded at the beginning of each term about applying sun-screen correctly before lunch and PE etc.

Students with naturally very dark skin will not be required to apply sunscreen should they (or their parents) choose.

A St Michael’s school hat must be worn throughout the year (August to May) at recess, lunchtime, for all outdoor activities and before and after school, except for the months of June and July.

Students who do not have a hat will be asked to sit in the shade area (under the tree in the Tuckshop Area or on silver seat at end of C Block). All members of the school community (including staff and parents assisting at outdoor functions) will be strongly encouraged to wear hats with a broad brim.
Under WH&S legislation, staff will be required to adopt sensible sun protection behavior when UV level are 3 and above to reduce their occupational UV exposure. This includes sensible clothing that covers skin, hat, sunglasses and access to sunscreen.

St Michael’s recognises that a SunSmart UV Alert is issued whenever the UV Index is forecast to reach 3 and above, and will use the time period displayed to inform staff and students when it is particularly necessary to use sun protection control measures while working and playing outdoors.

“Most Australians receive the bulk of their Vitamin D supply from exposing their skin to small amounts of ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Due to low levels of ultraviolet radiation in Canberra during the winter months, Cancer Council ACT does not generally recommend sun protection in June and July. This is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region.” Sun protection may still be required if spending extended time outdoors during this period, ie excursions and carnivals etc.

(Source: www.det.act.gov.au/policies)

When the lunch bell rings students may reapply sunscreen then wash their hands before eating lunch.

Teachers are not responsible for sunscreen application. Students may provide their own sunscreen.

Given the long-term health and safety issues that may result from unprotected exposure to UV solar radiation, the School Council will continue to ensure that adequate shaded areas are available within the school boundaries to provide a protective environment for students and staff.

It is the responsibility of parents of students with allergies or sensitive skin, or parents who have any other concerns, to test the classroom pump pack at the beginning of term.

Adequate shade will be provided by the school at sporting carnivals and outdoor events.

For swimming carnivals, athletic carnivals, excursions or trips, sunscreen should be applied before the student leaves home and then be reapplied by the student every two hours. Hats must be worn to every sports carnival. For outdoor swimming carnivals students and staff are asked to wear a protective rash vest or similar while in the water and protective clothing at other times.

Parents may choose not to use sunscreen on their children.

**National SunSmart Schools Program** St Michael’s was awarded Cancer Council SunSmart status in 2010. The school has agreed to submit a copy of this policy to be reviewed by Cancer Council ACT every three (3) years. This policy will be updated, if necessary, to maintain high national SunSmart standards.

Our next 3 year SunSmart Review will be in August 2016
Related Policies/References:
- Cancer Council ACT - National SunSmart Schools Program
- Catholic Education Office Sun Smart Policy
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Approved by: St Michael’s School Leadership Team
Date: 2013
Revision Date: 2016