

# SunSmart Hat-Wearing Champion's Guide

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Australia. Two in three of us who grow up here will be diagnosed with skin cancer in our lifetime.

The good news is that almost all skin cancers are preventable and protecting our skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation reduces our risk.

Wearing a SunSmart hat that protects the face, neck and ears, such as a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hat, is one of the simplest ways to protect students and adults in the school environment. However, research shows more could be done to improve this behaviour in primary schools.

**This guide has been developed to assist you, as school champion, to improve SunSmart hat-wearing and create a proud SunSmart culture. It is designed to be used with resources from the SunSmart Hat-Wearing Toolkit.**

## PLAN

- **Step 1** Gain leadership support
- **Step 2** Set up your SunSmart team
- **Step 3** Identify your school's strengths and needs
- **Step 4** Plan and prioritise
- **Step 5** Gain support and momentum

## DO

- **Step 6** Put your plan into action!

## REVIEW

- **Step 7** Monitor
- **Step 8** Improve



# PLAN

## Step 1: Gain leadership support

Gaining buy-in from school executives will help ensure the project is well resourced and given a high priority, providing a greater chance of success.



**TIP:** When we reduce UV exposure during the first 15 years of life, we significantly reduce children's skin cancer risk. Educate and motivate leaders to help them understand the importance of SunSmart hat-wearing.

## Step 2: Set up your SunSmart Team



Enlist two or more fellow champions to drive SunSmart engagement using the SunSmart Action Plan Template and resources. Consider teachers, office staff, Student Representative Council (SRC) or school community reps interested in sun safety, health and wellbeing.

**TIP:** Having a team with multiple roles across the school helps share responsibilities and supports whole school engagement.

## Step 3: Identify your school's strengths and needs

Key areas that successful schools often address include: Motivation, Access and Triggers (M.A.T). Use the **M.A.T model infographic** from the SunSmart Hat-Wearing Toolkit to identify your strengths, areas for improvement and challenges to SunSmart hat-wearing.

For strengths, consider what your school has achieved, how it was done and who was involved and incorporate these lessons into your plan.

To assess current SunSmart hat-wearing behaviours in the playground, consider using the **SunSmart hat-wearing playground observation tool**.

**TIP:** Use the statements below to help determine what changes may need to occur to achieve 100 per cent SunSmart hat-wearing.

- Students aren't allowed to wear baseball caps.
- The uniform shop only sells SunSmart hats.
- SunSmart hat-wearing rules are clearly communicated and consistently applied.
- Systems are in place to ensure all students have access to a SunSmart hat.
- Staff consistently role model good sun protection.
- The school regularly communicates SunSmart messages to its community.



# Step 4: Plan and prioritise

Use the Action Plan to confirm what resources you will implement. Resources are categorised by the M.A.T model to help you select resources based on your needs.

In your planning, consider:

- Who will be responsible for implementing the resource/s;
- The different audiences you will engage (e.g. students, parents/carers, teachers); and
- When you will use the resources.

**TIP:** Start planning early in Term 3 so you're ready to kick off implementation in Term 4/1.

Every school has different challenges. You may prioritise a big impact change like not allowing baseball caps, or changes that are feasible for now like communicating the importance of sun protection.



**TIP:** Staff development days are a great opportunity to present your plan. Use the **SunSmart behaviours at school PowerPoint** to support your pitch!



# Step 5: Gain support and momentum

Communicate your plan to the whole school community, letting staff know how they can help; for example, by using resources in classrooms and role modelling SunSmart behaviours.

Parents and carers play an important role. Consider a **SunSmart communication** in your next newsletter and sharing your plan at information evenings.

# DO

## Step 6: Put your plan into action!

Once you've set your plan, download the toolkit of resources and order hard copies at: [sunsmart.org.au](http://sunsmart.org.au)

Encourage students to take ownership by getting them involved. They could decide on the most visible locations for trigger posters, or check and record the daily UV on the relevant poster.

Embedding SunSmart hat-wearing into school culture so it's 'just what everyone does' takes time and effort. Success requires a clear and consistent approach across the whole school community.

**TIP:** Check out case studies on [sunsmart.org.au](http://sunsmart.org.au) to see how other schools have used the Toolkit to support SunSmart hat-wearing.



- 1. Establish simple rules:** For example, ensuring students and teachers always wears SunSmart hats outside. Students without a SunSmart hat need to play in the shade. Decide if the same rules apply for physical education and competitions.
- 2. Clearly communicate the rules:** For example, at an assembly, staff meeting, display trigger posters and share SunSmart communications with parents or carers.
- 3. Consistently apply the rules:** For example, regularly remind teachers at staff meetings of the importance of wearing a hat too.

# REVIEW

## Step 7: Monitor

Monitoring is critical because it allows you to see whether you're on track and keep momentum.

Meet with your team to review your Action Plan and discuss:

- What have we achieved so far?
- Have the selected resources been effective? If so, why?
- Are there areas that need more work? How can we address these?

How often you monitor progress depends on the needs of your school. If you start implementing resources at the beginning of Term 4, you may want to revisit your plan and selected resources at the start of the next term.

Collecting data on sun safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviours throughout implementation is a great way to track progress and demonstrate impact over time. Consider using the **SunSmart hat-wearing playground observation** tool to access student and teacher hat wearing behaviour.



**TIP:** Did you know, in SA the UV is high enough to damage unprotected skin most months of the year? Use the resources to keep sun safety on the agenda all year round.

## Step 8: Improve

For any goals met, what factors contributed to your success? Apply those learnings to areas that need work. This could be part of your annual policy review, or 3-yearly SunSmart membership.

**TIP:** Making sun safety a regular item at staff meetings will keep it a top priority.

Once you've got SunSmart hat-wearing covered, you may decide to focus on other areas. A best practice sun protection policy covers three key areas:

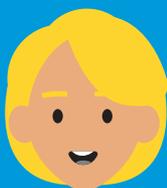
- Environment e.g. scheduling outdoor activities outside of peak UV times
- Behaviour e.g. sunscreen application by teachers and staff
- Information e.g. teaching sun protection

Visit the SunSmart website to download Cancer Council's best practice sun protection policy, check your school's SunSmart status, and find more resources to support other areas of your policy.



*"It has to be a coordinated effort by all community members to actively change the culture of the school and ensure that it becomes a part of every student's life."*

**Noele Steward,**  
Sports Coordinator,  
Rooty Hill Public School



*"Having a consistent whole school approach helps and is a great way to start. The teacher PowerPoint was handy to remind teachers about being sun safe, and whether we like it or not, we are role models."*

**Martin Zoglmeier,**  
Relieving Principal,  
Blaxland Public School



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