SunSmart Policy

Rationale: Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with 16,000 new cases and 1,200 deaths recorded each year.

There are four factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to these statistics:

1. The population is predominantly fair-skinned.
2. Ultraviolet light from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
3. For most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
4. Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Much of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable. Primary schools can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the school community to take effective skin protection measures.

Aims:
The aims of the Sunsmart policy at Our Lady Star of the Sea Terrigal are to promote among other students, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in schools to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.
Implementation Strategies for Skin Protection:
The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students attending our school are protected, throughout the year, from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

1. **As part of general skin protection strategies:**
   - Students will wear hats which protect the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside eg before/after school, lunch & fruit breaks, sport, sports carnivals, outdoor excursions and activities.
   - Students who do not have their hats with them will play in an area protected from the sun. A “No Hat – Play in the Undercroft” strategy will be established.
   - Students will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities.
   - Outdoor activities will be held in areas of shade whenever possible.
   - Staff should act as role models by practising SunSmart behaviour ie. wearing protective hats and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities, using SPF 30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen for skin protection, seeking shade whenever possible.

2. **Our School will:**
   - Ensure that school hats are appropriate and satisfy Cancer Council guidelines
   - Provide shelters and shade trees
   - Encourage and support the use of SPF 30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen for staff and students
   - Limit exposure times through timetable changes, when possible
   - Incorporate programs on skin cancer prevention in its curriculum
   - Reinforce regularly the Sunsmart Policy in a positive way through newsletters, parent meetings, student and teacher activities

3. **When enrolling a child, parents will be:**
   - Informed of the Sunsmart Policy
   - Required to follow the policy by providing their child with the appropriate school hat and supporting the school rule for wearing a hat during school.
   - Encouraged to act as positive role models and practise skin protective behaviour themselves, particularly when attending school functions.