

Rationale

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer. New Zealand has the highest melanoma rates in the world. One or more episodes of sunburn in childhood and adolescence have been shown to increase the risk of melanoma later in life. Throughout New Zealand sun protection is required from September to April inclusive, especially between the hours of 10am and 4pm. **Therefore, this policy applies only during Terms 1 and 4.**

The Cancer Society recognises that a balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of skin cancer and getting enough sun exposure for children to maintain adequate vitamin D levels, particularly in the winter months. Between May and August the UVI is 3 or under in most parts of New Zealand, especially in the south, so it is recommended that children do NOT wear hats, sunscreen or play in the shade during these months. During the winter months, children will be actively encouraged to enjoy the sun.

Sistema Waikato aims to be a SunSmart programme through the implementation of simple sun-safe practices.

Purpose

- To ensure that all children and staff are protected from damaging levels of UVR from the sun.
- To assist children in becoming more responsible for their own sun protection.
- To ensure families and new staff members are informed of the *Sistema Waikato* SunSmart policy.

Guidelines

- All children and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels are 3 and above. Particular care is taken between September and April (between 10am and 4pm) when UV levels reach their peak.
- Children are to use available areas of shade when outside. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to play in the shade or indoors.
- When outside, children are to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best.

SISTEMA WAIKATO SUN PROTECTION POLICY

- Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. Legionnaire, broad-brimmed (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or deep crown bucket hat (minimum 6 cm brim). (Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.)
- It is recommended that broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 is available for staff and children's use. Sunscreen is applied at least 15-20 minutes before going outdoors and re-applied every two hours. It must not be used to extend time outside.
- Staff should act as role models by:
 - wearing sun protective hats and clothing, and sunglasses when outside
 - applying broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.
 - using shade whenever possible.
- Our SunSmart policy is considered when planning all outdoor events.
- Families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen) when participating in and attending outdoor school activities.