

The background of the cover is a deep purple color. It features several stylized sun graphics. Each sun consists of a bright orange circular center surrounded by a ring of pointed, light orange rays. The suns are scattered across the page, with the largest one in the upper center containing the title text. Other suns are partially visible in the top left, bottom left, and bottom right corners.

Sun-Safe School Guide

Provided by the

Arizona Cancer Center

a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center
at The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center

Becoming a sun-safe school

School plays a major role in children’s daily lives. As an institution of learning, it can provide opportunities for developing and reinforcing lifelong positive health habits.

Children spend four to seven hours at school each day—including one to three hours outdoors for recess, lunch, physical education classes, and after-school activities. Depending on the climate and season, outdoor school activities may result in a significant amount of sun exposure. Research indicates that most people receive as much as 80 percent of their total lifetime sun exposure during their first 18 years. Overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun is the primary cause of skin cancer. With more than one million new cases each year, skin cancer is the most common and preventable cancer in the United States.

Schools can play an integral role in skin cancer prevention efforts by:

- Promoting sun-safe behaviors among students and staff; and
- Providing sun-safe environments, schedules, and activities.

This guide includes ideas to help make your school sun safe by:

- Assessing your school’s current sun safety policies;
- Promoting sun-safe lifestyle habits among students and staff;
- Designing sun-safe school environments;
- Implementing sun-safe policies and classroom curricula; and
- Building sun safety partnerships with parents, staff, and the community.

School administrators and parent groups may wish to target specific areas where behavior, policy, or environmental change is feasible and realistic. This booklet is intended to be a guide; choose the recommendations and action steps that meet your school’s needs and circumstances.

Adopting sun safety practices doesn’t have to be costly. In fact, many policy and lifestyle changes can be implemented with little or no cost to the school. Sun safety should be practiced by students, parents, and staff year-round. A sun-safe school doesn’t have to develop overnight. Policies and environmental changes may be introduced gradually over time.

Sun safety is the development and practice of positive health habits to reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation and protect the skin and eyes from sunburn and permanent damage.

Learning about sun damage

Ultraviolet-A (UVA) and ultraviolet-B (UVB) are the two types of radiation that can damage your skin. The sun's UVA rays can penetrate deeply and damage the skin's lower layers. This can cause sunburn, wrinkles, freckles, suntan, precancerous skin conditions, and skin cancer. The sun's UVB rays can damage the skin's outer layer and also can cause sunburn and skin cancer. Your risk or chance of skin damage depends on:

- your family history of skin cancer;
- your skin type (how easily your skin burns when exposed to the sun); and
- your behavior (how much time you spend in the sun unprotected).

Even though skin cancer most often develops in adulthood, its development may be related to our behavior as children. Scientists theorize that there are two primary triggers for skin cancer—accumulated lifetime exposure to the sun and severe sunburns during childhood. The more time spent in the sun over a lifetime, the greater the risk of developing nonmelanoma skin cancer.

How does this relate to children? We get most of our sun exposure as children. Kids play outdoors. They need to know how to stay safe in the sun by finding shade, wearing cover-up clothing, and using sunscreen.

Severe sunburns are insults to the skin and its cells that can cause permanent damage to the skin's deeper layers. Only one severe sunburn before the age of 18 appears to significantly increase your risk for developing melanoma. Because children spend so much time outdoors, it is crucial to teach them how to prevent sunburn.

Overexposure to the sun also can damage your eyes and cause cataracts. With cataracts, the lens of the eye becomes thick and cloudy, resulting in reduced vision or blindness.

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun can alter DNA and trigger an abnormal growth of skin cells, which can become either a precancerous skin condition or skin cancer. One type of precancerous skin condition, actinic keratosis (AK), may be mistaken for a patch of dry skin that won't go away. AKs are small, slightly raised scaly spots that may be tan, brown, gray or red. If left untreated, they may become cancerous.

Of course, the most serious consequence of too much sun exposure is skin cancer. There are two types of skin cancer: nonmelanoma and melanoma. Nonmelanoma skin cancers include basal cell cancer and squamous cell cancer.

- Basal cell cancer can be a slow-growing, fleshy, translucent bump on the head, neck or hands or a flat growth on the trunk of the body.
- Squamous cell cancer is a red, scaly patch typically found on the ear, face, lips or mouth.

Malignant melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer. It may appear without warning or begin in or near a mole or dark spot on the skin. Melanoma often begins as a mole that changes in size, color, or shape.

Helping your students and staff adopt sun-safe habits may help them avoid the health problems that can accompany a lifetime of sun exposure.

Promoting sun-safe lifestyle habits

Adopting sun-safe lifestyle habits—avoiding sun exposure during peak hours; using shade; wearing cover-up clothing, sunglasses, and hats; and using sunscreen can help prevent skin cancer. The best protection is provided when all of these sun-safe behaviors are practiced together. Schools can promote the adoption of sun-safe lifestyle habits by their students and staff in a number of ways.

Cover-up clothing

Clothing can block out the sun’s harmful rays physically and should be one of the first lines of defense against sun exposure.

Style and fabric affect the amount of protection that clothes provide against the sun’s ultraviolet rays.

Long-sleeved shirts with collars and long pants provide the most protection because they leave less skin exposed to the sun. Loosely-fitted clothing is more comfortable since it allows air to flow through and cool the skin. Lighter colors may feel cooler, but darker colors actually absorb ultraviolet light and provide more protection for your skin.

Fabric is full of tiny holes that can allow ultraviolet light through. The fewer the number and the smaller the size of the holes in the fabric, the more it blocks ultraviolet radiation.

How schools can promote cover-up clothing

- Encourage students to wear long-sleeved shirts with collars and long pants.
- Discourage sleeveless shirts, tank tops, and shorts.
- Encourage students without cover-up clothing to play in the shade.
- Adopt a school uniform policy that requires shirts with sleeves and collars.
- Encourage staff to set a good example by wearing sun-protective clothes.
- Solicit the help of student leaders (e.g., student council, cheerleaders) to promote sun-protective clothing among their peers.
- Sell cover-up clothing with the school colors and logo.
- Offer awards each month for the class with the most children wearing sun-protective clothing every day.

Hats

Hats offer the best method of minimizing ultraviolet radiation to the face, head, ears, and neck. Different styles of hats provide varying levels of sun protection, but any hat is better than no hat.

A hat with a wide brim that goes all the way around offers the best protection for the cheeks, nose, ears, head, and neck. The hat's brim should be at least 3 to 4 inches wide. A wide-brimmed hat provides approximately 50 percent protection from direct exposure.

A flappy-jack or legionnaire cap provides good protection for the ears and neck but leaves areas of the cheeks exposed to the sun.

Baseball hats offer some protection for the face but do not protect the sensitive skin on the ears, cheeks, and neck.

Visors do not protect the ears, cheeks, neck or head.

How schools can promote hats

- Encourage or even require students to wear wide-brimmed, sun-safe hats for outdoor activities and field trips.
- Encourage teachers and playground monitors to set good examples by wearing hats when outside.
- Adopt a “No hat, stay in the shade or inside” policy.
- Establish guidelines for acceptable types of hats for school use.
- Adopt a school uniform policy that requires hats.
- Solicit the help of student leaders (e.g., student council, cheerleaders) to promote hats among their peers.
- Sell hats with the school colors and logo.
- Offer awards each month for the class with the most children wearing hats every day.

Sunglasses

Overexposure to the sun can cause short- and long-term damage to the eyes. Protection of the eyes is especially important for young children since the lens of the eye is not able to completely protect the retina from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation until approximately 30 years of age.

The percentage of the ultraviolet rays filtered out by sunglasses is printed on the label. Inexpensive sunglasses that provide 100 percent protection can be found at local variety stores, grocery stores, and department stores.

Students and staff who wear prescription glasses can have an ultraviolet coating added to their lenses.

How schools can promote sunglasses

- Encourage everyone to wear sunglasses that filter out 100 percent of UV rays.
- Solicit the help of student leaders (e.g., student council, cheerleaders) to promote sunglasses among their peers.
- Sell sunglasses with the school colors and logo.
- Offer awards each month for the class with the most children wearing sunglasses every day.

Sunscreen

Use sunscreen every day—even on cloudy days. Seventy to 80 percent of the sun’s damaging rays can penetrate through cloudy haze and water.

Sunscreens work in two ways. The chemicals in most sunscreens absorb ultraviolet radiation before it can damage the skin. Some sunscreens block ultraviolet rays by scattering or reflecting them away from the skin.

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) refers to the sunscreen’s ability to block out the sun’s rays for a period of time. A sunscreen with an SPF of 15 will allow you to stay in the sun 15 times longer than the amount of time it normally takes for your unprotected skin to burn. If your unprotected skin burns in ten minutes, a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 that is applied correctly will provide protection from burning for a total of 150 minutes (15 x 10 minutes). A higher SPF will provide even longer protection.

Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going out in the sun to allow time for it to work. Use broad-spectrum sunscreen products that block out both ultraviolet-A and ultraviolet-B rays.

Choose sunscreens with the fewest unnecessary ingredients. Use waterproof sunscreens that will not be washed off through perspiration, and to be sure you’re protected, reapply sunscreen every two hours if swimming or sweating.

Finally, recent studies suggest that insect repellents containing DEET (the active ingredient in most insect repellents) may degrade the SPF of sunscreens. If you need to use an insect repellent, consider wearing protective clothing and a hat to maximize your sun protection.

How schools can promote sunscreen use

- Encourage everyone to use sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF of 15 or greater every day, all year long, on all sun-exposed areas of the skin.
- Encourage staff to set a good example by using sunscreen and lip balm.
- Allow time during school for the application of sunscreen.
- Sell zinc oxide and sunscreen.
- Add the use of sunscreen to permission slips for outdoor field trips and events. Ask parents to provide or apply sunscreen to their children for these outdoor activities.
- Solicit the help of student leaders (e.g., student council, cheerleaders) to promote sunscreen among their peers.

Designing sun-safe school environments

Changing your school's physical environment and policies also can help students and staff reduce their lifetime sun exposure and potential risk for skin cancer.

Providing shade

Trees can be an excellent source of shade. Dense trees screen out about 80 percent of the sun's rays.

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter months. Non-deciduous trees provide year-round shade and protection from the sun's rays. With proper placement, trees cool buildings in the summer.

Shade structures, such as porches, ramadas, shade cloth and umbrellas, can provide year-round protection.

If fabric or shade cloth is used on shade structures, make sure that it screens out at least 95 percent of the ultraviolet radiation. Use materials that are guaranteed not to rot in the sun, tear, or crack for several years.

Umbrellas provide up to 50 percent protection from ultraviolet radiation.

Although shade structures provide some protection from the direct sun rays, ultraviolet radiation can reflect off of sand, tile, water, buildings, cement, and other surfaces. Even in the shade, it is important to wear cover-up clothes, hats, and sunscreen.

How schools can become sun-safe environments

- Assess the school grounds to determine where shade is needed and what is feasible.
 - Plant trees in open spaces where shade is needed and where it will be used. Outdoor lunch areas, playgrounds, and school bus and parent pick-up areas are possible locations for shade trees.
 - Establish an Arbor Day tradition, including a tree-planting ceremony and educational activities promoting the benefits of trees.
-
- Erect temporary and permanent shade structures in open spaces where shade is needed and where it will be used. Outdoor lunch areas, playgrounds, and school bus and parent pick-up areas are possible locations for shade structures.
 - Mount umbrella stands on picnic tables in outdoor lunch areas.
 - Cover playground equipment with shade cloth.
 - Encourage students to use shaded areas.
 - Plan outdoor activities for shaded areas.
 - Focus fund-raising activities on making the school's outdoor environment sun safe.
-
- Make indoor areas available to students. Allow students to choose visiting the library, study hall, gym, or computer lab as alternatives to going outdoors.

Implementing sun-safe school policies

Sun safety policies

The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Traditionally, school children may be outside for recess, lunch breaks, or physical education classes during this time. As much as 60 percent of ultraviolet radiation exposure could be reduced by avoiding sun exposure during these hours of peak sun intensity.

Teaching children early in life about preventive practices may lead to lifelong sun-safe habits.

Formalizing your sun safety policy in writing will help foster your school's commitment to the established goals.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compiles data from instruments that measure ultraviolet radiation in several U.S. cities. These data are reported to the National Weather Service and the public as the UV Index. Each city is given a daily sun intensity score from 0 to 10+.

How schools can adopt sun safety policies

- Schedule outdoor activities and field trips before or after peak hours whenever possible.
- Plan field trips to locations where adequate shade is available.
- Encourage all field trip and athletic event participants to wear sun-safe clothing, hats, and sunscreen.
- Include requests for sun protection (clothes, hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen) on all permission slips for field trips and other outdoor events.
- Offer indoor physical activities, such as aerobics, jump rope, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, or dance, on days of high sun intensity.

- Teach students about sun safety and reinforce school policies through classroom instruction that meets national education standards.
- Each year, designate several hours of classroom instruction to sun safety. Incorporate age-appropriate sun safety (skin cancer prevention) activities or curricula into lesson plans.

- Develop a written sun safety policy for the school to use as an implementation guide and tool for monitoring progress. (See page 12 for Sun-Safe School Policy Planning Worksheet.)

- Encourage students to access the UV Index daily via newspapers or the Internet and report it during morning announcements so that students and staff can determine what precautions they should take to be sun safe each day.

Building sun safety partnerships

By working with staff, parents, students, and community leaders, schools can build sun safety partnerships, which can help in the planning and implementing of sun-safe school policies and environmental changes.

Sun safety partnerships

Parent participation is essential for the success of school-based health education programs. Parents can support the sun-protective behavior change of their children.

Build a sun safety partnership with your school's administration, staff, students, their families, and the community.

Focus parental fund-raising efforts on sun safety.

Encourage donations from businesses and community groups.

How schools can promote parent and community involvement

- Educate parents, students, and staff about sun safety by inviting a local dermatologist or meteorologist to give a presentation.
- Inform parents about the school's sun safety policies when they enroll their children.
- Encourage parents to provide students with their own sunscreen for daily use.
- Encourage parents to ensure that their children have cover-up clothes and sunscreen on before going to school.
- Encourage parents and staff to set good examples by wearing cover-up clothes, sunglasses, hats, and sunscreen.
- Send a copy of each of the parent information sheets home to parents or add them to four issues of your school newsletter. (See handouts in back pocket of this booklet.)

Raise funds or use donations to:

- Make the playgrounds sun safe;
- Buy sunscreen in bulk for sporting events and physical education classes;
- Buy equipment for indoor sports;
- Buy sun-safe promotional items for student recognition;
- Plant trees;
- Build permanent shade structures;
- Build a gymnasium or indoor sporting facility.

Students can serve as sun safety ambassadors for the community.

- Encourage students to write articles about sun safety for school newsletters and yearbooks.
- Encourage students to become sun safety peer educators and role models for younger children or students from other schools.
- Encourage students to design sun safety projects for science, art, and other exhibitions.
- Students in scouts, 4-H, and other service clubs can address sun safety issues in their community activities.
- Have students announce the daily UV Index during morning announcements.

Raise parental and community awareness by developing sun safety events, contests, and media stories.

Grassroots community efforts can lead to political and legislative support for sun-safe school environments to promote public health.

- Include sun-safe hats, sunglasses, and shirts in school spirit activities.
- Develop fun learning events for children, such as Sun Awareness Day or Arbor Day. These events could include hat fashion shows, poster contests, tree-planting ceremonies, and class contests to promote sun-safe behaviors.
- Encourage school districts to include ramadas or shaded areas in new school construction or remodeling plans.
- Distribute a media release on your school's sun safety efforts.

Formulating a sun safety policy

How can you make your school more sun safe? The first step is to formulate a written Sun Safety Policy that will serve as an implementation guide.

The most effective school policies are built on partnerships that combine the talents and responsibilities of all members of the school community.

- Teachers stimulate awareness, provide information, teach skills, and act as positive role models. Their input into the planning process will establish a strong support base and realistic implementation strategies.
- Parents facilitate changes in their children’s sun safety habits. They also can raise community awareness and funds for environmental changes.
- Students provide feedback and increase the legitimacy of sun-safe activities in the eyes of their peers.
- Community members provide resources, skills, and materials for program implementation.

A sun-safe school action plan should include:

- Defined goals;
- Implementation plan detailing the strategies for achieving the goals; and
- Monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure the success and future development of the school’s sun safety policies.

To develop your school’s sun safety policy, follow these simple steps:

- 1) Complete the Sun Safety School Assessment Questionnaire in this booklet (see pages 13-16) to provide direction regarding potential areas for improvement.
- 2) Build a sun safety partnership by soliciting input from staff, parents, students, and the community. ***Sun safety information sheets and a sample parent letter have been included in the back pocket of this booklet. The informational handouts can be distributed to staff and parents directly or added to the school newsletter.***
- 3) With the help of your sun safety partners, determine what sun safety actions are feasible, given your school’s financial and human resources.
- 4) Use the school assessment, input from your sun safety partners, and the planning grid on page 11 to define your school’s sun safety goals. (Remember, becoming a sun-safe school is an evolutionary process. Be realistic when setting goals and plan to implement your sun safety program over a two- to three-year period.)
- 5) Write your policy, publicize it, and monitor its implementation.

EVALUATION:

Build your evaluation plan around your measurable goals. To monitor progress, use your answers on the Sun-Safe School Assessment as a “snapshot” of your school’s social and physical environment before and after your sun-safe policies are implemented.

Guidelines for developing sun-safe goals

Use this chart to guide your goal-setting. It provides examples for starting points and future goals to work toward.

	Starting Points	Future Goals
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students and staff to wear cover-up clothing (long-sleeved shirts and long pants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer students the option of staying indoors. Offer sun-safe shirts with the school logo for purchase.
Hats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students and staff to wear wide-brimmed or floppy-jack hats when outdoors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a “No hat, stay in the shade or inside” policy for students. Offer sun-safe hats with the school logo for purchase.
Sunglasses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students and staff to wear sunglasses when outdoors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer sunglasses for purchase.
Sunscreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students and staff to use sunscreen lotion and lip balm with SPF 15 or more. Encourage parents to supply sunscreen for their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include sunscreen use on permission slips as a requirement for participation in outdoor field trips. Offer sunscreen for use or purchase.
Shade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students and staff to stay indoors or in the shade whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant trees that provide maximum shade. Purchase portable shade structures (e.g., umbrellas, tarps) for school activities. Build permanent shade structures (e.g., ramadas, porches, shade cloth).
School Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff to schedule outdoor activities during non-peak sun intensity hours (before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer students the option of staying indoors. Re-schedule outdoor activities for early morning.

Sun-safe policy planning worksheet

School: _____ Date: _____

MISSION STATEMENT: To create a school environment which promotes sun safety at all levels.

To guide goal-setting, answer the following questions for each goal on a separate sheet of paper:

- Who will do it?
- How often will they do it?
- How will they do it?
- By when will they do it?
- Why will they do it?

Overall goal(s): _____

Year 1 goal(s):

Date goal(s) set: _____

Action Steps

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Date goal(s) reviewed: _____

Did you meet your goals?

- All Some None
 All Some None
 All Some None

Year 2 goal(s):

Date goal(s) set: _____

Action Steps

1. _____
2. _____

Date goal(s) reviewed: _____

Did you meet your goals?

- All Some None
 All Some None

Assessing your school's sun safety

The following questionnaire will help you assess your school's sun safety environment, policies, and procedures. Each answer has a score from one to five; put the score for your answer in the far right column and add them up at the end of each section. Scoring is explained on page 16.

Student Sun Safety

Scores

1. What percentage of *male students* at your school wear hats?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | 80-100% | 2 | 20-39% | 0 | None | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | 60-79% | 1 | 1-19% | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | 40-59% | | | | | |

2. Our *male students* most often wear . . .

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Wide-brimmed hat | 3 | Cloth tennis hat | 0 | Most often they | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Flappy Jack hat
(legionnaire style) | 2 | Baseball hat | | do not wear hats. | |
| | | 1 | Visor | 0 | Not Sure | |

3. What percentage of *female students* at your school wear hats?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | 80-100% | 2 | 20-39% | 0 | None | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | 60-79% | 1 | 1-19% | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | 40-59% | | | | | |

4. Our *female students* most often wear . . .

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Wide-brimmed hat | 3 | Cloth tennis hat | 0 | Most often they | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Flappy Jack hat
(legionnaire style) | 2 | Baseball hat | | do not wear hats. | |
| | | 1 | Visor | 0 | Not Sure | |

5. What percentage of *students* at your school wear sunglasses?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | 80-100% | 2 | 20-39% | 0 | None | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | 60-79% | 1 | 1-19% | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | 40-59% | | | | | |

Student Sun Safety Score

Staff Sun Safety

6. What percentage of *staff* at your school wear hats?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | 80-100% | 2 | 20-39% | 0 | None | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | 60-79% | 1 | 1-19% | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | 40-59% | | | | | |

7. Our staff most often wear . . .

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Wide-brimmed hat | 3 | Cloth tennis hat | 0 | Most often they do not wear hats. | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Flappy Jack hat (legionnaire style) | 2 | Baseball hat | 0 | Not Sure | |
| | | 1 | Visor | 0 | | |

8. What percentage of staff at your school wear sunglasses?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | 80-100% | 2 | 20-39% | 0 | None | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | 60-79% | 1 | 1-19% | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | 40-59% | | | | | |

Staff Sun Safety Score

School Environment

9. Our school provides adequate shade in areas that are accessible to students (i.e., more than 25 percent of the outdoor area is protected by trees or shade structures.)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Strongly Agree | 2 | Somewhat Disagree | 0 | Strongly Disagree | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Agree | 1 | Disagree | 0 | Not Sure | |
| 3 | Somewhat Agree | | | | | |

10. Which of the following forms of shade does your school have?

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Multiple permanent shade structures and trees | 3 | Many shade trees | 1 | Portable shade (awnings, umbrellas) | <input type="text"/> |
| | | 2 | A few shade trees | 0 | No shade | |
| 4 | At least one permanent shade structure and trees | | | | | |

School Environment Score

School Policies

11. Our school encourages students to use available shade.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|-----------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | Always | 3 | Sometimes | 1 | Not Sure | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Often | 2 | Rarely | 0 | Never | |

12. Our school encourages students to wear hats.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|-----------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | Always | 3 | Sometimes | 1 | Not Sure | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Often | 2 | Rarely | 0 | Never | |

13. Our school encourages staff to wear hats.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|-----------|---|----------|----------------------|
| 5 | Always | 3 | Sometimes | 1 | Not Sure | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | Often | 2 | Rarely | 0 | Never | |

14. Our school encourages students to wear sunglasses when outdoors.

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

15. Our school encourages staff to wear sunglasses when outdoors.

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

16. Our school encourages sunscreen use for outdoor activities and field trips.

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

17. Our school encourages parents to supply sunscreen for their children's use at school.

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

18. On average, our students are outdoors (including lunch, recess, physical education classes, after-school activities). . .

5 1 hour or less per day
4 1-2 hours per day

3 2-3 hours per day
2 More than 3 hours per day

1 More than 4 hours per day
0 Not Sure

19. Some percentage of our students are outdoors during the hours when the sun's rays are most intense (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

20. Our students are encouraged to choose indoor activities, such as going to the library or computer lab, instead being outside during the hours of peak sun intensity (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

5 Always
4 Often

3 Sometimes
2 Rarely

1 Not Sure
0 Never

School Policy Score

Total Score

Date: _____



ARIZONA[®]
CANCER CENTER



A National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center
at The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center
1515 North Campbell Avenue
P.O. Box 245013
Tucson, Arizona 85724-5013
520-626-6044

For cancer information, call the COPE Line at 520-626-7935
or 1-800-622-COPE in Arizona.

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Teaching children about sun safety

Without the sun, life absolutely could not exist. Tragically, the sun's rays also can be deadly. Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation can severely damage skin and eyes. The effects of sun damage include freckling, tanning, sunburning, wrinkles, cataracts, blindness, and skin cancer.

Skin cancer is by far the most common cancer in the United States, with more than 800,000 new cases diagnosed each year. It is at epidemic proportions, especially right here in Southern Arizona, which has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the United States. In fact, Southern Arizona's skin cancer rate on a worldwide level is second only to Queensland, Australia.

There are two main types of skin cancer, melanoma and nonmelanoma. Most skin cancers are nonmelanoma and are not life-threatening. However, they can spread widely and cause severe disfigurement, so they always must be removed. Melanoma is much less common than nonmelanoma, but its incidence appears to be increasing. Melanoma causes more than just disfigurement: it can kill you.

While some skin cancers may be caused by heredity, most are caused by overexposure to the sun. Even though skin cancer most frequently develops in adulthood, its development is related to our behavior as children. Scientists believe that there are two primary triggers for skin cancer—accumulated lifetime exposure to the sun and severe sunburns. The more time you spend in the sun over your lifetime, the greater your risk of developing skin cancer.

Unfortunately, most of us get the bulk of our sun exposure before age 18. That means that our children are especially at risk for sun overexposure. Just one severe sunburn before age 18 appears to greatly increase your risk for developing melanoma. Severe sunburns are insults to the skin and its cells that can cause permanent damage to the skin's deeper layers. Because children spend so much time outdoors, it is vital to teach them skills and behaviors that will help prevent sunburn.

Sun safety can literally save your child's life. For this reason, your family must know how to "play safe in the sun" by finding shade, wearing cover-up clothing, and using sunscreen. Your family should practice sun safety every day of the year.

Sun Safety Recommendations for You and Your Family

- Limit time spent in the sun.
- Avoid the sun's rays between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Apply a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater every day of the year.
- Wear clothing that protects the skin—long sleeves and long pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible—find shade trees and ramadas, or bring an umbrella.
- Avoid artificial tanning from booths, beds, or lamps.
- Be careful not to get a sunburn.
- Examine your skin regularly.
- Make sun safety a family habit.

Sun safety: living with sunshine

All light is a form of energy. Some light energy, like a light bulb, is visible. You can see it. Other light energy, like infrared light, is warm. You can feel it. And some light energy, like ultraviolet (UV) light, is invisible. You cannot see it or feel it. This kind of light can severely damage your skin if you are not careful. Exposure to ultraviolet light, the light we get from the sun, causes skin cancer. Skin cancer can permanently disfigure or even kill you, if you're not careful in the sun.

As the sun moves higher in the sky, the sun's rays create shorter, more direct shadows. The sun's rays have to travel a much shorter distance to reach the Earth. This makes the sunlight much more intense. Peak sun hours, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., are when the sun's rays are strongest and most damaging to the skin. During these times, the sun is most likely to cause freckles, painful sunburns, and, over time, unattractive wrinkles. Sunburns can lead to skin cancer.

Plan outdoor activities in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid peak sun intensity hours. When outdoor activities cannot be planned outside peak sun hours, use shaded areas. Many outdoor areas do not have enough skin-saving shade. Be sure to take your own source of shade, such as an umbrella, tarp, or portable awning. By taking shade with you, you and your family will always be sun safe—no matter where you go.

At home, you can make permanent shade. There are several ways to provide stable sources of shade for your family. You can plant a tree or add a porch or awning onto an existing building. Trees are one of the best sources of shade and provide excellent protection from the sun. Dense shade trees provide a "green screen," a physical block that filters out about 80 percent of the sun's rays.

Whenever you are outdoors during peak sun hours, remember to take shade with you or stay protected under the permanent shade you have made.

Sun safety: wearing cover-up clothes

Arizonans are at extreme risk for skin cancer. Many people overlook a simple form of sun protection: clothing. Your clothing can provide you with important protection from the sun's harmful rays.

The style of clothing and the amount of skin the clothes cover greatly affects the level of sun protection the clothes provide. The best sun protection comes from clothing that covers more of the skin, such as long-sleeved shirts with collars, long pants, and socks and shoes. The worst sun protection comes from bathing suits, sleeveless shirts, shorts, and sandals. Wearing clothes that cover more skin is always the best choice.

The level of protection also depends on fabric color and construction. Tightly constructed fabrics that have fewer or smaller holes between threads block a great deal of ultraviolet light. Loosely constructed fabrics that have many or larger holes between threads provide little protection. Lighter colors may make you feel cooler because they reflect infrared light, but darker colors will absorb ultraviolet light and provide much more protection for your skin. Choose clothes that provide the best sun protection.

Hats are another important form of sun protection. The more skin the hat covers or shades from the sun, the better. Wide-brimmed hats with at least a 3-inch brim are highly recommended. Wide-brimmed hats, such as cowboy hats, made of tightly constructed straw or fabric provide the very best protection from the overly intense rays of the sun. Flappy-jack hats have a brim like a baseball cap and flaps of fabric that cover the ears and back of the neck. This type of hat also provides excellent protection from the sun. A wide-brimmed hat is the best choice since it protects the face, head, neck, and ears. However, wearing any type of hat—even a baseball cap—is better than wearing no hat at all.

A third form of wearable sun protection is sunglasses. Like the skin, eyes can be damaged from too much sunlight. Sunglasses are an excellent way to protect the eyes from the sun's rays. Most sunglasses provide some ultraviolet protection. Like hats, wearing any pair of sunglasses is better than wearing none.

When you dress, keep sun safety in mind. Clothes, hats, and sunglasses are wearable shade. Every day is a sun-safe day when you and your family make sun-safe choices.

Sun safety: using sunscreen

Sunscreen is an important part of every sun protection program. However, it should be used in addition to cover-up clothing, not in place of it. Apply sunscreen to all areas of your skin not covered by clothing.

Sunscreens work in two ways. They either absorb or block the harmful rays of the sun. The chemicals in most sunscreens absorb ultraviolet (UV) radiation before it can damage the skin. Some sunscreens block the sun's UV rays by scattering or reflecting them away from the skin.

Ultraviolet light emits two forms of radiation called UVA and UVB. These are what damage your skin. UVB penetrates only the upper layers of the skin, but UVA penetrates deeply into the skin's lower layers. UVA is believed to cause melanoma, a very deadly form of skin cancer. All sunscreens absorb UVB. Some sunscreens absorb UVA and UVB. Sunscreens that protect against both UVA and UVB provide the most complete skin protection. A sunscreen that says "broad spectrum" on the bottle means that it will absorb all UVA and UVB rays. A few sunscreens contain chemicals that physically block UVA and UVB (like clothing blocks the sun's rays). Always look for these suncreening compounds on product labels:

UVA ABSORBERS	UVB ABSORBERS	PHYSICAL BLOCKS
Benzophenones Parsol 1789 (avobenzene)	Salicylates Cinnamates Benzophenones Padimate O and A Para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA)	Titanium Dioxide Zinc Oxide

Always choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater. The *higher* the SPF number, the *longer* the sunscreen's protection will last. As a guide for understanding how long sunscreen protection will last, multiply the time it takes your skin to burn by the SPF number. Generally, pale skin will burn in about 10 minutes in the summer. If you use a sunscreen with SPF 15, you will get $10 \text{ minutes} \times \text{SPF } 15 = 150 \text{ minutes}$, or 2 hours and 30 minutes of protection. An SPF 30 sunscreen would provide $10 \text{ minutes} \times \text{SPF } 30 = 300 \text{ minutes}$, or 5 hours of protection.

Wear sunscreen every day all year long to protect yourself from the Arizona sun. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside so the chemicals have time to work. Always use enough to cover your exposed skin with an even coat. If you know that you'll be out in the sun for a long period of time, start by choosing a sunscreen with a higher SPF number. It's a good idea to use waterproof sunscreens and to reapply your sunscreen every two hours if you're sweating or swimming.

Choose sunscreens that have as few additives as possible to reduce the chance of skin irritation. Finally, recent studies suggest that insect repellents containing DEET (the active ingredient in most insect repellents) may degrade the SPF of sunscreens. If you need to use an insect repellent, consider wearing protective clothing and a hat to maximize your sun protection.

Sun safety: sample parent letter

Dear Parents,

Protecting your child's skin from sun exposure is as important to us as it is to you. Research indicates that most people receive as much as 80 percent of their total lifetime sun exposure during the first 18 years of life. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun is the primary cause of sunburn, suntan, freckles, wrinkles, and skin cancer.

Fortunately, most skin damage is preventable. For this reason, our school has chosen to adopt school policies to become a sun-safe school.

We hope you will join us in helping your children develop sun-safe habits now to reduce their risk of skin cancer later in life. Please reinforce what they will be learning in school by encouraging them to:

- Play indoors or in the shade during the hours of peak sun intensity (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.).
- Play in the shade when they're outdoors.
- Wear cover-up clothes—long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes, and wide-brimmed hats.
- Wear sunglasses with ultraviolet protection.
- Apply broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more every day on all exposed skin areas.

Another important thing you can do is to be a sun-safe role model and protect your skin from the sun. If you have any questions about our new policies, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

(principal's name)