

Guide to implementing SunSmart hat wearing.

This guide is designed to assist you, as your school's champion, in the implementation of 100% SunSmart hat wearing at your school. It provides a step-by-step overview to help you and your school community create the environment that supports a proudly SunSmart hat wearing culture. This guide is designed to be used alongside the **Action Plan Template** and other SunSmart resources provided. There are resources available to help with each of the steps detailed below.

Wearing a SunSmart hat protects the head and face from overexposure to Ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Australia. Two in three people who grow up in Australia will be diagnosed with skin cancer. Overexposure to solar UV radiation causes at least 95% of skin cancers in Australia. This means that if you protect your skin, you reduce your risk.

The good news is that the number of young people diagnosed with melanoma is decreasing, and this reduction has been attributed to our sun protection efforts including the SunSmart program in primary schools. However, more can be done to enhance sun protection in school and normalise SunSmart hat wearing.

Make it happen!

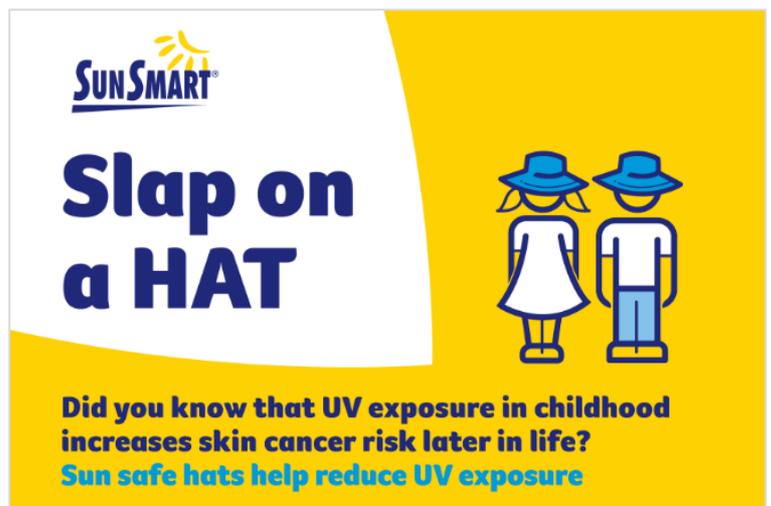
1. Lead and secure buy-in

Strong and consistent leadership is important for success when implementing initiatives at school.

Identifying one or more people to act as the school's **SunSmart champion** is the first important step in making it happen. The champion/s in your school will drive activities and engagement, as well as devise approaches to address challenges as they arise. The champion/s will use this Guide and the Action Plan template and resources to implement SunSmart hat wearing.

Gaining buy-in from key school staff such as the Executive and Principal to drive the SunSmart hat wearing agenda will help ensure it is assigned a high priority, kept on the radar and embedded in school culture.

The resources designed to **educate and motivate the school community** may also be used up front to educate and motivate your school's champion/s and leadership group. By making SunSmart hat wearing an integral part of school culture, supported by school leadership buy-in, there is much greater chance of sustained success.



2. Review current practice

Embedding SunSmart hat wearing into school culture and achieving 100% hat wearing can be a challenge. Even schools that have the majority of students wearing SunSmart hats can explore ways to further strengthen sun protection practices and help engrain good SunSmart practice so that it's 'just what everyone does'. **Use the statements below** to help identify your school's strengths, areas for improvement and potential barriers.

- a) Students aren't allowed to wear baseball caps¹.
- b) The school uniform shop only sells SunSmart hats.
- c) Rules around SunSmart hat wearing are clearly communicated and consistently applied.
- d) There are systems in place to help ensure all students have access to a SunSmart hat.
- e) Reminders are used to help students to remember to wear their SunSmart hat and good behaviour is reinforced.
- f) Staff and senior students consistently role model good sun protection practices, including wearing a SunSmart hat.
- g) Sun safety is embedded in school culture and regularly on the agenda, to help address any challenges as they arise.
- h) The school community understands the link between exposure to UV radiation and skin cancer risk, and how good sun protection can help prevent the vast majority (95%) of skin cancers.
- i) The school regularly communicates SunSmart messages to the school community.
- j) Sun safety is considered in planning for all activities, including sport and excursions.

3. Plan and prioritise

Once you've worked through the above statements, use the Action Plan Template and resources listed within it to **plan what your school will implement** to improve SunSmart hat wearing. Part of this will be to decide what your school's rules are around SunSmart hat wearing and how the rules will be communicated and applied. In your planning, consider the different audiences you will engage with (e.g. students, parents/carers, teachers/staff) as well as the M.A.T. model (motivation, access, triggers) detailed in the Action Plan Template.

Remember, every school is different and has unique challenges. What works in one school may not work in another. You may choose to address areas that will have a big impact (e.g. not allowing any baseball caps) or to prioritise changes or resources that are the most feasible for your school at this current point in time.

4. Keeping it on the agenda

Schools where sun safety has been embedded into school culture say that SunSmart hat wearing is '**just what everyone does**'. With leadership and systems set up to regularly discuss sun safety and address challenges as they arise, good SunSmart practice can remain the norm. However, if those systems and leadership haven't been established there is a risk that the SunSmart message may diminish.

Consider how your school will keep sun safety on the agenda and ways you can make it part of your school identity. For example: a regular item at staff meetings/school assembly; a process for discussing and addressing challenges; and regular communications with parents/carers.

¹ Your school may decide to allow students participating in sport to wear a baseball cap. See the text box in resource 14, **Updating school uniform requirements to support SunSmart hat use**, for more information.