Guidelines in this document support schools in implementing sun safe practices to maximize the enjoyment and health benefits associated with regular outdoor activities.
Acknowledgements

The guidelines in this document have been developed and published by the Canadian Cancer Society and Evergreen. Parts of this guide are adapted from Cancer Research UK and the Cancer Council Australia.

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**Email:** sunsense@ontario.cancer.ca

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Preface

Existing research confirms that there are compelling benefits to children playing and learning outdoors. We believe that appropriate sun safety habits are essential to maximize health and enjoyment.

This resource takes you through the step-by-step process to develop and implement a SunSense policy for your school.

This document can also be used as a guide for anyone involved in the development of a sun protection policy for the places where children play, learn and are cared for, including camps and child care centres.

Practising sun safety is easy and important to protect your skin. Follow the steps laid out in our policy guidelines!

Let’s work together to get outside, keep our skin safe and prevent skin cancer!

In addition to this Guide, additional information about skin cancer, sun protection and shade development, can be found online at the Canadian Cancer Society’s (Ontario Division) SunSense web page.

To learn more, please visit cancer.ca/sunsense
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The Outdoors and Sun Safety

Outdoor play and physical activity are essential to children’s health and development. This guide will help you to develop a policy for your school and implement procedures to make sun safety part of the school routine. The policy and procedures you develop will ensure safe outdoor play and learning experience at school – every day, all year round.

Research indicates childhood exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is an important contributing factor to the development of skin cancer in later life. Given students are at school during the highest risk period of the day – between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. – schools play a major role in both minimizing students’ exposure and positively influencing student behavior by establishing and reinforcing healthy sun safe habits.

Sun exposure and skin cancer
Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in Canada and also one of the most preventable!

While the cause of many cancers remains unknown, the reason for this most common cancer is too many sunburns and too much UVR exposure over many years.

1 in 7 people will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime; however, we know that this disease is largely preventable. People under the age of 18 are at the highest risk. Children and youth spend more time outside than adults do – in fact, 80% of people’s exposure to UVR occurs before the age of 18.

Staying inside is not the answer.
As Canadian children are spending more time indoors, physical activity is decreasing, childhood obesity rates are soaring, and there is a diminished sense of community amongst children. These trends are impossible to ignore. It is imperative that children spend time outdoors.

By establishing effective routines, enhancing shade on school grounds, and developing and implementing a SunSense policy, schools can ensure that children are enjoying the range of benefits associated with time in the outdoors while being sun safe.
Building a SunSense Culture at School

Effective sun safety involves the school community working together!

Developing and implementing a SunSense policy is an important step in establishing sun safe practices at your school. Schools, in partnership with families and their communities, can play a significant role in reducing exposure to UVR and changing behavior through policy, education and role modeling.

Schools can build a culture of sun safety by embedding sun safe practices into everyday routines and addressing key considerations around sun protection and education.

Key considerations for effective sun safety at school:
• build SunSense practices into your school’s everyday routines.
• enhance shade on your school grounds.
• increase awareness about SunSense practices.

Using these considerations to plan and implement effective action helps schools to:
• provide a safe environment for students and staff by reducing exposure to UVR.
• increase awareness and reinforce healthy sun safe behavior among students and staff.
• reduce the incidence of later in life skin cancer and related skin damage in children and young people.

FOCUS
Schools are a workplace as well!

Under the Ministry of Labor’s Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers and employees have responsibilities in reducing the risk of all types of injuries and risks to health while at work. Overexposure to the sun is one of these risks.

A few simple measures can be taken by employers to protect employees from the risk of skin cancer, such as providing shade, personal protection from the sun, training and education and planning of outdoor activities (e.g. dividing into shorter segments, or scheduling outside of peak UVR times where possible).

SunSense Practices

5 important sun safe behaviours to promote and build into school routines.

1. PLAY IN THE SHADE!
Seek shade or create your own where it is not available

2. COVER UP!
Ear loose clothes to cover your arms and legs

3. WEAR A BUCKET HAT!
A wide brim protects your ears, neck and face

4. PUT ON SUNSCREEN!
SPF 30 or higher to protect your skin

5. WEAR SUNGLASSES!
Protect your eyes
Best Practices Key Ingredients in a Successful SunSense Policy

Include the following elements in your sun safety policy for success:

EDUCATION: Learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behavior.
- **Awareness:** staff, students and parents/guardians learn the Canadian Cancer Society’s 5 SunSense practices (see Appendix 4, p. 22).
- **Resources:** provide resources and support to staff on how to enhance sun safety for all school activities. (e.g. sun safety checklist). Provide parents/guardians with luggage tags (available for order on the SunSense web page) to enable them to reinforce sun safe behavior at home and pack appropriately for students going to school.
- **Education:** include classroom activities, newsletters, assemblies for continued education on sun safety for staff, parents/guardians and students.

PROTECTION: Providing an environment that enables students and staff to seek shade from the sun.
- **Plan ahead:** hold your outdoor activities in the shade where possible and divide outdoor time into segments over the course of the day, reducing the length of UVR exposure at any one particular time.
- **Adequate shade:** enhance the shade on your school ground with natural (shade trees) and built shade (shade sails, pergolas, awnings).
- **Placement of shade:** ensure that shade is covering the spaces actively used during peak sun hours by conducting a shade audit and assessing the use patterns on your school grounds.

COLLABORATION: Working with parents/guardians, staff, students and the wider community to reinforce awareness and practice of sun safety, and promote a healthy school.
- **Be a role model:** staff and parents/guardians should follow the 5 SunSense practices (see Appendix 4, p. 22) every day, all year round, so students can learn and follow.
- **Promote and celebrate SunSense practices:** engage students in regular sun safe practices (e.g. by reminding them to put on a hat when playing outdoors, applying and reapplying sunscreen) and using sun safety bracelets available for order on our SunSense web page to reward students who have practised sun safety.
- **Involve students:** provide students with opportunities to take the lead in making SunSense announcements, developing SunSense campaigns and promoting SunSense practices to their peers and the school community.

ONGOING EVALUATION: The policy will work best if it is revised and updated annually. Monitoring and evaluating your policy will help you to make effective changes.
- **Complete regular checklist:** designate a team of Sun Safety Champions to monitor SunSense routines and practices with a regular checklist. A sample is provided in this guide (see Appendix 1, p. 16).
- **Be involved:** observe how sun safe your school is. Address challenges and make suggestions for improvement. A sample assessment tool provided in Appendix 1 can be used.
- **Revise:** review the effectiveness of the policy after a set, pre-defined time period. Regularly monitor through reporting in staff meetings and make amendments to the policy if required.
Steps in Developing a SunSense Policy

The process of developing a SunSense policy is as important as the policy itself. A SunSense policy works best if it is developed in consultation with the whole school community and is specific to your school.

You don’t need to be experienced in policy planning to develop a SunSense policy; a simple straightforward policy can foster a sun safe environment and behaviours for staff and students!

There are some elements common to effective sun safety policies. The following are six simple steps to developing a successful SunSense policy:

1. **Form a Committee**
   Establish a collective vision around sun safety by working with staff, students, parents/guardians and the wider community to create a healthy school environment for all. You may wish to build this responsibility into an existing committee or start a specific SunSense committee.

   The committee may include representatives from key groups such as: board personnel (e.g. facilities staff); school personnel (e.g. principal, teachers); students; health and safety coordinators; parents/guardians and public health nurses.

   The committee’s role is to make recommendations about the content of the policy, to develop and circulate a draft and to prepare the final version of the document. This committee can also be responsible for taking charge of all sun safety matters within the school and for the delivery and promotion of the policy.

2. **Perform an Environmental Scan of Your School**
   Look at what the school is already doing to promote sun safety and shade. This will help you identify what needs to be done and how much progress you are making. You can use the checklist available in this document to help you assess your school’s sun safety across key considerations including SunSense practices (planning, clothing and sunscreen), enhancing shade and increasing awareness (see Appendix 1, p. 16).

3. **Prepare a Draft**
   Your SunSense policy should be created in consultation with its users (including teachers, parents/guardians and students).

   The policy should contain defined goals, clear steps to implement sun protection strategies and a monitoring and evaluation section. A sample policy has been included in this resource (see Appendix 2, p. 19). When the draft has been written, clearly label it as a draft and make it available for staff, students and parents/guardians to review.

   You don’t need to be experienced in policy planning to develop a SunSense policy; a simple straightforward policy can foster a sun safe environment and behaviours for staff and students!

**TIPS**

- **Phased Approach**: Consider a phased approach to your plan. For example, you may choose to focus on building SunSense practices into your school’s routines in the first year and enhancing shade on your school grounds in the second year of your plan. While laying out your goals, be realistic about the budget and time available to complete each task.

- **Assign Responsibilities**: Be clear about who is responsible for implementing each task. For example, someone from the health and safety committee to lead the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Ultimately, the policy can be managed by an administrator.

- **Timelines**: Agree on timelines for implementing the different tasks in your plan.
4. Final Draft
Present the final version of the policy to the appropriate decision making group for approval.

5. Implement and Publicize
A policy is only effective when it is implemented. Officially launch the SunSense policy so all members of the school community are aware of its existence. This could take place on a special day (for example during National Sun Awareness Week in June), at an assembly or at a relevant meeting.

Publicize the policy as widely as possible. Consider giving a copy to all staff, including the policy in a newsletter and sharing information about the policy and its implications with parents/guardians and students. Give regular updates on the progress you make.

It is also important to ensure continued implementation of the policy. Schools can routinely promote the policy by:
• briefing all new staff.
• including sun protection as a set agenda item at relevant committee meetings (for example at the first staff meeting of the year; at event planning meetings; at school ground greening committee meetings).
• including information in your parent/guardian information booklet; and promoting ongoing sun safety at assemblies, in school newsletters and through regular announcements.

6. Monitor and Evaluate
Monitor how effective your SunSense policy has been and identify areas for improvement by conducting regular evaluations.

Evaluation strategies could include:
• conducting a brief survey pre and post implementation of the policy to measure changes in sun safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. You can use the environmental scan to assist with this step (see Appendix 1, p. 16).
• photographing changes in the school environment.

• assessing the provision of shade.
• monitoring incidences of sunburn to see if these are decreasing.
• continuing to gather feedback from all the people involved, for example regular reporting at staff meetings.
• designating a SunSense champion (or team) to regularly monitor progress using a SunSense checklist. A sample is provided in this guide (see Appendix 5, p. 23).

The policy will work best if it is revised and updated every year. Monitoring and evaluating your policy will help you to make effective changes to foster a culture of SunSense.

TIPS
Involve the entire school community to maximize impact!

• Involve students in the launch of the new policy and as leaders to promote SunSense. Hold a Sun Awareness Day (include activities such as a sun hat day, a poster competition, a SunSense fashion parade with students as models); involve students in making regular SunSense announcements; and developing campaigns.

• Encourage staff to act as positive role models by wearing appropriate hats, sunscreen, clothing and sunglasses whenever outdoors.

• Engage the community. By practising SunSense at home, parents/guardians and caregivers support the messages taught at school about sun safety.
SunSense in Action

Here are some examples of schools, camps and childcare centres that are successfully building a SunSense culture by addressing key considerations around sun protection, education, and behaviors and embedding sun safety into their regular practices and routines.

Building SunSense Practices into Your School’s Everyday Routines

Success Case 1: Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo, Ontario
The Waterloo Region District School Board has two 40 minute nutrition breaks during the school day. At some schools, the students eat indoors for 20 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of outdoor free play for each break. This limits the length of time of UVR exposure for each break and minimizes time in the midday sun, while still allowing for 40 minutes of outdoor free play over the course of the day.

Success Case 2: Kohoku Kindergarten, Yokohama, Japan
At Kohoku Kindergarten in Yokohama, Japan, hats are supplied by the school, reinforcing the expectation that students wear hats in the outdoors. Simple hat storage units provide easy grab and go access and a separate labelled spot for each student’s hat. Students know that they are expected to wear their hats every time they go outside and putting on their hat is part of their routine.
**Success Case 3: Evergreen’s Green City Adventure Camp, Toronto, Ontario**

At Evergreen’s Green City Adventure Camp, counsellors check in with children and their parents/guardians (depending on the age of the children) at morning drop-off to ensure that children have arrived wearing sunscreen. They also have scheduled sunscreen breaks throughout the day to reapply sunscreen. While children are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen, the camp team keeps a supply of sunscreen handy and accessible to all of the children. The staff and children also wear hats and plan activities and breaks in the shade where possible. Two additional tips from the camp director:

- spray sunscreen is the easiest for children to apply.
- having mini-sunscreen bottles on clips that attach to backpacks ensures that children always have sunscreen handy.

**Enhancing Shade on Your School Grounds**

**Success Case 1: Secord Elementary School, Toronto, Ontario**

Trees placed in the asphalt areas at Secord Elementary School in Toronto provide long-term relief from the sun and heat where students actively circulate and play. Wooden planting beds around the trees serve as seating, allowing students a place to rest in the shade, and also help to protect the tree roots and bark from damage.

---

**TIPS**

**Plan ahead**

- **Plan ahead**: host outdoor activities in the shade and divide outdoor time into segments over the course of the day when possible.
- **Set routines** around sunscreen, hats and clothing to foster daily sun safe behavior, all year round.
- **Model SunSense** to set a good example for students.
Success Case 2: YMCA Childcare Centre, Brampton, Ontario & Ryerson Early Learning Centre, Toronto, Ontario
While waiting for shade trees to grow, it is important to think about how built structures can augment shade on your site. The YMCA Childcare Centre in Brampton, Ontario uses shade sails to provide protection from the sun. The Ryerson Early Learning Centre in Toronto, Ontario has included play posts in their outdoor space. By draping fabric and blankets over the posts, they are able to provide students with access to shade and a special child-size place where they can socialize and engage in imaginative play.

Success Case 3: Brookmill Boulevard Junior Public School, Toronto, Ontario
After conducting a shade audit to assess shade on their school grounds, Brookmill Boulevard Junior Public School in Toronto, Ontario identified that they had existing shade trees at the front of their school in an area typically off-limits during recess and play. When planning their new full day kindergarten yard, they chose to place it at the front of the school to take advantage of existing shade and provide immediate sun protection for the students.

TIPS

Fundraising
- Prepare funding proposals and apply for grants. Evergreen has information about grants for school ground greening on their website: www.evergreen.ca
- Plan creative fundraising events such as fair trade coffee sales, pizza lunch and bake sales.
- Involve students and parents in fundraising efforts.

Shade tree selection
- Select large caliper native trees.
- Consider canopy density (see pp. 63-65 of the Designing for Shade Guide for recommendations).* 
- Tree placement is essential. Ensure that you are shading the areas actively used during the most critical times of the day (e.g. active play areas used during recess and physical education, seating areas used during lunch break and as class gathering spaces).

*The EcoSchools Designing for Shade and Energy Conservation Guide by Evergreen and The Toronto District School Board provides more information on shade for school grounds from conducting a shade audit and selecting the right trees for shade, to fundraising and implementing your action plan.
Increasing Awareness about Sun Safety

**Success Case 1: Toronto District School Board EcoSchools, Toronto, Ontario**
Several Toronto District School Board EcoSchools have campaigns that focus on sun safety. Including information on sun safety in school newsletters, morning announcements, school assemblies and adding school spirit hat days are some of the ways that schools have been increasing awareness.

![Photo Credit: Mike Derblich](image1)

**Success Case 2: Kennall Vale School, Cornwall, UK**
During sun safety week in 2011, sun safety lessons and activities were included as part of regular instruction in health and physical education. The science department also included investigations on the angle of the sun as well as shadow and light experiments to increase awareness of the sun’s impact.

![Photo Credit: Kelly Cruise](image2)
Success Case Study: Testimonial from YMCA of Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Summer Camps

“At the YMCA (the Y) we take the sun seriously. Sun protection for our camp staff and young campers enables safe outdoor play! At the Y, we believe in a strong community approach for awareness of sun protection. This includes education for camp staff, campers and parents! In addition, reminders and role modelling have played a huge role in fostering of sun safe behavior at our camp. To make this a positive and exciting experience for our young campers, sun safety is also part of our beads recognition program. Campers are incented with glow in the dark beads provided by the Canadian Cancer Society for every SunSense tip they follow e.g. wearing a brim hat, sunscreen, sunglasses.

After a two year focus on sun safety education we worked with the Canadian Cancer Society in 2014 to create an easy to follow sun safety policy which became an integral part of our Health and Safety policy.

As a result of our 4 year partnership with CCS, sun safety is now an integral element of camp culture leading to a significant reduction in sun burns (almost no sun burns reported since the inception of the policy, in the last 2 years).”

Leigh Coffey
Manager, Summer Day Camps
YMCA of Greater Toronto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>SunSense education and activities provided by the Canadian Cancer Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>SunSense Education + introduction of UVR beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Sun safety policy and UVR beads (education and behavior part of camp culture by now)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>UVR beads and newsletter tips for parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIPS

- Incorporate SunSense education into student instruction.
- Including first-hand opportunities to see the importance of sun protection can go a long way. Engage students in measuring shade and shadows, assessing sun safety and recommending improvements. Resources, in the form of posters, games, trivia questions and more are available free of charge from the Canadian Cancer Society. Click here to download or order.
- Awareness-raising sessions for parents and staff will assist in gaining support for the implementation of a sun protection policy. The Canadian Cancer Society resources may be used to assist with this step.

Snapshot: The role of a SunSense policy in fostering sun safe behavior.
Appendix: Supporting Tools
Appendix 1  
Environmental scan: identify goals and existing sun protection measures

This checklist can be used to support your committee in evaluating your school’s current sun protection measures and to guide the creation of a SunSense policy.

Consider the sun protection measures that are already in place as well as those that you would like to achieve. This will give you an idea of what is working well and where you can improve.

### 1. Build SunSense practices into your school’s everyday routines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun Protection strategy</th>
<th>In Place</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Not Planned</th>
<th>How can we improve in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHADE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We choose shaded locations for activities that happen over an extended period of time (lunch, group gatherings, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shade is not available, outdoor time is focused into shorter periods where possible (for example, lunch break is shortened and morning break is extended).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLOTHING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats on for fun in the sun! Students are encouraged to wear wide brim hats that protect ears, neck and face and eyes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are encouraged to wear tops that cover their shoulders (vests and strappy tops are discouraged).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are allowed and encouraged to wear UVR protective sunglasses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff are encouraged to wear sunglasses, hats and suitable clothing to role model sun safe behavior.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians are encouraged to wear sun hats when visiting the school.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNSCREEN</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters are sent home to parents/guardians regarding:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>· the importance of wearing sunscreen</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>· recommended contents of the sunscreen: SPF 30+, broad-spectrum and water resistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· permission for students to reapply sunscreen as needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· child is to be trained, by parents/guardians, on how to correctly apply sunscreen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· students may come to school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· wearing sunscreen applied at home</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· bringing their own labelled bottle of sunscreen</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers will remind students, as appropriate, when to apply/reapply their sunscreen during the outdoor activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a student is having difficulty applying the sunscreen, the teacher will provide training to the student on how to apply sunscreen correctly (teachers will not physically apply sunscreen to any part of the student’s body).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each student has their own labelled bottle of sunscreen at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. Enhance shade on your school grounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun Protection strategy</th>
<th>In Place</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Not Planned</th>
<th>How can we improve in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A shade audit has been conducted to assess the availability and effectiveness of shade on the school grounds.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A plan is in place to enhance shade in areas where it is needed.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising for trees and shade structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats and equipment are moved to shady areas.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary shade structures (such as shade tents) are used to augment shade during special events such as BBQs, community festivals, and play days.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FOCUS

Natural, built and portable shade provide protection from UVR exposure.

- For shade to be effective, the play and use patterns of your site and the movement of the sun must be taken into account.
- It is important to shade gathering spots, active play areas and circulation routes.

The *EcoSchools Designing for Shade and Energy Conservation Guide* by Evergreen and the Toronto District School Board provides more information on shade for school grounds from conducting a shade audit and selecting the right trees for shade, to fundraising and implementing your action plan.

Photo Credit: Evergreen
3. Increase awareness about SunSense practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun Protection strategy</th>
<th>In Place</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Not Planned</th>
<th>How can we improve in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All staff are made aware of this policy and the importance of sun protection within the school environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age appropriate lessons on sun protection strategies and skin cancer awareness are incorporated into student’s education at all grade levels. Some examples can be found on p. 25.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun protection is regularly promoted to students in other ways (e.g. assemblies, workshops, talks, through newsletters and announcements).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians are informed of the importance of sun protection through information sent home in a letter informing them of the SunSense policy (see the parent/guardian letter template in these guidelines, p. 21).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOCUS**

It is important to raise awareness of why we need sun protection if you want to encourage students to change the way they behave in the sun.
Appendix 2
Sample policy

A suggested template/outline, along with a sample sun safety policy are provided below for schools. They are intended as a guide only and principals/administrators should feel free to adapt or amend the model policies to suit the needs of their school.

USE SUNSENSE
Get outdoors and be sun safe

[School Name Here]
SunSense Policy Statement

Rationale:

Purpose:

Elements of Policy:

• Collaboration

• Sun Safety
  1. Building SunSense into school routines
  2. Enhancing shade on school grounds
  3. Increasing awareness

• Ongoing Evaluation

This policy has been agreed by the governing body on ____________, and will be reviewed [PERIOD e.g. annually /every 2 years].

Signed: __________________

USE SUNSENSE
Get outdoors and be sun safe
[ABC School]

SunSense Policy Statement

At ABC School we acknowledge the importance of sun protection and want staff and students to enjoy the sun safely.

Collaboration:
This policy will be implemented in collaboration with staff, students and parents/guardians. All stakeholders will work together to achieve sun safety through:

Sun Safety:
1. Building SunSense practices into the school’s everyday routines
   ✓ Activities are held in the shade where possible, and breaks from the sun are built into outdoor activities.
   ✓ We will focus outdoor recess into shorter nutrition breaks throughout the day, ensuring that children have adequate free play outside, while minimizing the length of sun exposure for each break.

   Clothing:
   • When outside in sunny weather, children will be encouraged to wear the appropriate clothing, hats that cover the ears, face and neck, and sunglasses.
   • Staff are encouraged to model sun safety by wearing a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and appropriate clothing.

   Sunscreen:
   • All children will be made aware of the importance of wearing sunscreen with SPF 30+ during outdoor activities, lunch breaks, during outdoor activities (e.g., lunch breaks, Physical Education lessons, school trips).
   • We will send letters home asking parents/guardians to send students to school wearing sunscreen, to pack sunscreen and for permission for students to reapply sunscreen as needed.

2. Enhancing shade on the school grounds
   • We are planting a grove of shade trees along the south and west side of the play structure on the school ground to increase shade coverage in active play areas (Spring 2017).
   • A canopy will be made available to provide shade in the parent’s/guardian’s outdoor waiting area to increase shade coverage in gathering spaces (by Spring 2017).
   • We are fundraising to buy a free-standing permanent shade canopy to increase shade cover over the sand play area and will hopefully have enough budget for this (by Spring 2017).

3. Increasing awareness about SunSense practices.
   • All students will have at least 3 SunSense lesson(s) per year.
   • We will talk about how to practise SunSense at assemblies and morning announcements.
   • Parents and guardians will be sent a letter explaining what the school is doing about sun protection and how they can help.
   • Teachers will attend a special SunSense training workshop where information on sun safety will be provided.

Evaluation:
The sun safety committee will review this annually. This policy was developed with the help of staff, pupils and parents/guardians in June 2016. We will monitor our progress and review the policy annually.

Signed:______________________________
Appendix 3
Sample letter to parents/guardians

Use SunSense
Get outdoors and be sun safe

ABC Primary School 123 Road
City A1B 2C3
March 2016
Dear Parent or Guardian,

ABC school is proud to announce our new SunSense policy.

Outdoor learning and play are essential to children’s health and development. We have developed the sun protection policy with the help of parents/guardians, teachers and students to ensure that everyone can enjoy the sun and the benefits of the outdoors safely.

Sun safety should be practiced year-round to provide protection from the sun’s ultraviolet rays (UVR), which can damage children’s skin and increase the risk of skin cancer.

Your child’s health and wellbeing are very important to us, which is why we have decided to:
• Increase the amount of school time spent learning about sun protection.
• Provide more shade on the school ground.
• Encourage students to wear hats and t-shirts when outside.
• Encourage students to use at least SPF 30 sunscreen especially during summer months.

More details of these and other new sun protection plans can be found in our SunSense policy which I am attaching to this letter. I have also included a SunSense information card which will explain how to practice SunSense at home. In addition, luggage tags with SunSense reminders can be obtained from the teacher and attached to your child’s backpack. These can be personalized with your child’s name.

Your support is very important if our new policies are going to work. You can help by:
• Talking to your child about the importance of sun protection at home.
• Sending your child to school with a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen.
• Returning the sunscreen permission slip at the bottom of school field trip permission forms.
• Volunteering to help raise money for a new playground shade canopy.

For more information on skin cancer and sun safety, click here
For more information on shade design, click here

Thank you for your cooperation!

All the best,

John David
School Principal
Appendix 4
The Canadian Cancer Society’s 5 sun safety practices

USE SUNSENSE
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1. Seek Shade
Seek shade or create your own where it is not available

2. Slip on protective clothing
Wear weather appropriate clothing that provides sun protection

3. Slap on a wide-brimmed hat
A wide brim protects your ears, neck and face

4. Slop on Sunscreen
SPF 30 or higher to protect your skin

5. Slide on sunglasses
Protect your eyes

Generously supported by:
Appendix 5
Sample SunSense champions - checklist
It is important to regularly monitor the implementation of SunSense practices and routines at your school. You may wish to engage a team of student and staff SunSense champions to help with this step and build a sense of pride and responsibility in maintaining sun safe routines.

Use the following checklist as a tool for regular monitoring. A daily check as part of a SunSense Campaign during SunSafety Awareness Week is a great way to emphasize the key messaging in addition to regular monitoring.

SunSense Champions - Checklist
This checklist is to help monitor ongoing implementation of the school SunSense policy. Please complete this checklist regularly and submit to the Sun Safety Champion team to share successes and identify areas where the school can improve.

SunSense Practices:

- Planning: activities are held in the shade where possible, and breaks from the sun are built into outdoor activities.
- Students are encouraged to practise sun safe behaviors (e.g. wear a hat each time they go outside).
- The school and staff are increasing awareness about sun safety through regular and ongoing activities (morning announcements, newsletters, student instruction).
- Staff are reinforcing the Canadian Cancer Society’s 5 key sun safety messages each day.
- Staff are encouraged to model SunSense (e.g. wear a hat and sunscreen for outdoor activities).
Appendix 6
Frequently asked questions about sun safety and UVR exposure:

Why is sun protection important for children and young people?
The number of cases of malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, is rising. Skin cancer is largely preventable by protecting against ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun and indoor tanning. This is particularly important for children and young people whose skin is more delicate and easily damaged. You can enjoy the sun safely by using simple SunSense. For more information about skin cancer or sun safety visit cancer.ca call 1-888-939-3333.

What about vitamin D?
We all need some sun to make enough vitamin D. Enjoying the sun safely, while taking care not to burn, should help most people get a good balance without raising the risk of skin cancer. For more information on vitamin D, visit cancer.ca or call 1-888-939-3333.

Why have a sun protection policy?
Schools have a responsibility to ensure that students are protected from overexposure to UVR from the sun. This is particularly important when engaging in school based activities such as sports days, outdoor PE lessons, outdoor excursions and water sports, where the potential for sunburn is higher. Although fair-skinned people have a higher risk of sun damage, sun protection is important for everyone.

What is the UV index?
Ultraviolet (UV) rays are the sun rays that can cause sunburn. Long-term exposure to UVR rays has been associated with skin aging, eye cataracts, weakening of the immune system, and skin cancer. The higher the UV index, the stronger the sun’s rays, and the greater the chance of getting a sunburn and increased risk of skin cancer.

The UV index forecast for the day and more details about UV index level and FAQs are located here on Environment Canada’s website: www.ec.gc.ca/uv/.

A free UV Index and sun protection poster can also be downloaded or ordered here on their website: www.ec.gc.ca/uv/default.asp?lang=En&n=DCF1C20A-1

Source: Environment Canada
Resources:

**Shade**

**Enhancing Shade on School Grounds**
The EcoSchools Designing for Shade and Energy Conservation Guide by Evergreen and the Toronto District School Board. This guide includes practical tips for involving the school community in the design process, conducting a shade audit of the school ground, creating a planting plan and developing a fundraising strategy. [http://www.evergreen.ca/downloads/pdfs/Designing-For-Shade.pdf](http://www.evergreen.ca/downloads/pdfs/Designing-For-Shade.pdf)

**Curriculum**

Note: While these curriculum-linked resources have been compiled to support sun safety, they are maintained by the identified organizations and are not formally endorsed by all partners.

**Safe Fun in the Sun**

**Solar UV in our World**
This resource has been created by ACER for secondary schools with a focus on understanding and investigating UVR its impact on health and what students can do. [http://acer-acre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Solar-UV-Booklet.pdf](http://acer-acre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Solar-UV-Booklet.pdf)

**Physical Activity Support Resources**
The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines ([http://safety.ophea.net/](http://safety.ophea.net/)) managed by Ophea, represent the minimum standards for risk management practice for school boards. They focus the attention of teachers, intramural supervisors and coaches on safe practices, in every physical activity, in order to minimize the element of risk. Sun safety is integrated within the Guidelines in the Generic section of each module, and in all activity pages that lead to sun exposure.

**Materials are available for FREE.**
You can download documents or order materials online [cancer.ca/sunsense](http://cancer.ca/sunsense)

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*Teaching Guides*

**SunSense UV bead bracelet**
Note: beads change color in the sun
About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society fights cancer by:

• doing everything we can to prevent cancer.
• funding research to outsmart cancer.
• empowering, informing and supporting Canadians living with cancer.
• advocating for public policies to improve the health of Canadians.
• rallying Canadians to get involved in the fight against cancer.

Contact us for up-to-date information about cancer, our services or to make a donation.

For more information visit cancer.ca or call 1888-939-3333