

British Photo dermatology Group Position Statement:

Sun Protection in Schools

Background

Education can change behaviour (1) and school based educational interventions have been shown to raise children's knowledge and awareness of sun safety (2). Therefore promotion of sun safety in schools, particularly at primary level when behaviour is most likely to be influenced, is expected to lead to a long-term reduction in skin cancer incidence (3).

Recommendations

- The BPG strongly recommends that educational activities to promote and to sustain sun awareness be part of the curriculum in all schools. This should encompass:

Awareness of the risks of both natural sunlight and sun beds.

Promotion of methods to limit exposure through:

- Seeking shade
 - Use of protective clothing and hats
 - Use of broad spectrum, high SPF sun creams
- Schools should be aware that sunburn (skin redness following sun exposure) should always be avoided and should be aware of the "SunSmart" schools resources (4).
 - Sun awareness education should be balanced, appropriate to the level of risk of individuals and not discourage outdoors activities, which have known benefits (physical activity, well being, vitamin D synthesis). Advice should be reinforced regularly.
 - Environmental shade should be provided in schools wherever feasible (5).
 - Staff should act as positive role models.
 - Teachers should be aware that occasionally an individual child may be particularly at risk of adverse effects on health from sun exposure (through a photosensitive skin condition/sun allergy, or with increased

risk of skin cancer) and have special needs with regards to sun protection.

References

1. Behaviour change. NICE public health guidance 6 (2007). Available from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/PH6
2. Sun protection and sunburn in primary school children: the influence of age, gender and coloring. Dixon H, Borland R, Hill D. *Prev Med* 1999 28 (2) 119-30
3. Targeting children through school based education and policy strategies: comprehensive cancer control activities in melanoma prevention. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2011 65 (S)104-13
4. SunSmart schools resources from www.Sunsmart.org.uk/schools/schoolsresources/sunsmart-schools-resources
- 5 Skin cancer prevention: information, resources and environmental changes www.nice.org.uk/guidance/PH32